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Evangelistic Sermons!**

# ***The Bible Guide***

**Vance Ferrell**

## **A Fascinating Journey through Bible Truth**

**Contains 40 chapters  
and over 1,500 Bible quotations,  
plus over 150 additional Bible references**

**Over 500 powerful illustrations and poems  
20 special charts and illustrations**

**The solid, historic Bible beliefs of  
the early Christian Church**

**Special Bible truths  
for our time in history**

**Forty chapters - forty days  
to a better understanding  
of God's will for your life**



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***by Vance Ferrell***

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**The Bible Guide provides, in one book, the most complete, easily understood, very readable, lowest-cost coverage of the crucial Bible truths for our time in history—that is available anywhere.**

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# The Bible Study Guide

## A SET OF FORTY LESSONS COVERING OUR HISTORIC BELIEFS

This is an extremely thorough set of Bible sermon studies on our primary, historic beliefs. Everything is not only carefully organized in its presentation, but it is also filled with beautiful illustrations and poems. You will find it excellent for personal study, and also for presentation in small group meetings. Each chapter is the basis of an outstanding 11 o'clock worship sermon, or in evangelistic meetings. —vf

The page numbers, below, match the book, which you can purchase from us in low-cost boxful amounts.

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## Introduction

# Starting on the Path

**HERE IS A MAN who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman.** At His birth, those trying to protect Him had to flee with Him, lest He be slain. He worked in a small village carpenter shop until He was thirty, and then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put His foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place where He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself.

**While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against Him.** His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of an illegal trial. He was nailed to a cross of rough wood, between two thieves. While He was dying His executors gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth—his coat. When He was dead, He was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of someone who barely knew Him.

**Twenty long centuries have come and gone, and today He is the centerpiece of the human race and the inspiration of human progress in all things worthwhile.** I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life.

**Who was this Man?** His birth terrorized the reigning monarch. In childhood His questions baffled the most highly educated men of the nation. In manhood He ruled the course of nature, walked upon billows of water as if on pavement,

and hushed the sea to sleep. He healed multitudes with a kindly look and touch, and never charged for what He did. He condemned sin, but freely forgave and accepted every sinner who came to Him for the healing of his soul.

He never wrote a book, and yet all the libraries of the country could not hold the books that have been written about Him. He never wrote a song, and yet His life has furnished the theme for more songs than have all the songwriters combined. He never founded a college, but all the schools put together cannot boast of having as many devoted students.

**The names of the proud emperors of Greece and Rome have crumbled into dust.** The names of the great generals and philosophers of all ages have vanished into nothingness. But the name of this Man abounds more and more. Though twenty centuries have passed since the scenes of His crucifixion, yet He still lives. The people of His time could not destroy Him, and the grave could not hold Him.

He stands forth upon the highest pinnacle of human greatness and heavenly glory, proclaimed of God, acknowledged by angels, adored by His closest followers, and feared by devils,—as the living, personal Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

*(Adapted from Phillips Brooks)*

“I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that have ever marched, and all the navies that were ever built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth so powerfully as has that one solitary life.”—*Quoted in Albert Henry Newman, A Manual of Church History, Vol. 1, p. 80.*

**IN THIS BOOK, I want to tell you how to come to Jesus Christ and make Him you own.** I want to tell you how to live in such a way that you can live with Him in heaven later on.

**This is an extremely readable book and it is full of guidance from that best of all books, the holy Bible.** The most important teachings of Scripture are given here. These are truths we all need to know. And each quotation will be from that most accurate translation: the King James Bible, loved and trusted by generations of Christians for nearly 400 years.

**This is a book which can change your life.**

**WE NEED GOD more than we need anything else.** We need His help to find a way out of our sins, and into a close, loving relationship with our Creator. We have tried and tried, and we cannot fix our own lives. Our best efforts are a bunch of patchwork. Everything keeps unraveling. Our best

resolutions fall to pieces.

**The night that Aaron Burr flung open the shutters of his window** at Princeton University and shouted, “Good-bye, God,” he closed the windows of his soul.

But he who today will open wide the shutters of his soul to God will find the light of God’s presence shining in.

“Still, still with Thee, when purple morning breaketh! When the bird waketh, and the shadows flee;

“Fairer than morning, lovelier than the daylight, Dawns the sweet consciousness, I am with Thee!

“When sinks the soul, subdued by toil, to slumber, Its closing eye looks up to Thee in prayer.

“Sweet the repose beneath Thy wings o’ershading, But sweeter still, to wake and find Thee there.

“So shall it be at last, in that bright morning, When the soul waketh, and life’s shadows flee;

“Oh, in that glad hour, fairer than day dawning, Shall rise the glorious thought, I am with Thee!”

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— PART ONE —

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THE BIBLE AND CHRIST

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A Complete Evangelistic Sermon: Chapter One

# How to Understand the Bible

Provided by a God of Love and Power

**A voice crackled over the shortwave radio.**  
“Turn your ship 23° to larboard.”

An irritated voice replied, “Turn *your* ship starboard 23°!”

Back came the response, “Turn your ship 23° to larboard—to the left!”

Now, thoroughly aroused, in an authoritative voice came the reply, “*You turn to the right! 23°!*”

The unknown voice ahead of them responded, “Turn your ship 23° to the left.”

In his most commanding voice, the captain replied, “*I am the commander* of a U.S. Naval vessel, and we are part of the Sixth Fleet. We have two destroyers and a fuel ship accompanying us. *I command you: Turn your ship 23° to the right! Do it now!*”

Back came that totally self-assured, calm voice: “Turn your ship 23° to the left. I am the lighthouse.”

—***This was an actual shortwave communication which occurred at night a number of years ago, before radar and satellite communications, during a heavy coastal fog in the Northeast.***

The captain instantly issued orders to swerve his entire fleet to the left—out to sea,—narrowly missing collision with the rocky coast of Maine. He had yielded to a higher authority, and his obedience saved many lives.

**The Bible is the only solidly grounded source we can turn to for guidance in these difficult times.** We dare not rely on our own ideas, or the suggestions of friends. Only in the Word of God can we find the help we need if we are to steer a safe course through the narrow channel of life, and miss the rocks on either side.

**The Word of God sends the light we need to guide us in every emergency.**

Someone has said that “light travels at remarkable speed, until it meets the human mind.”

“Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” *Psalm 119:105*. When this light strikes natural human minds, it is not appreciated

because “the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them” (*2 Corinthians 4:4*).

## THE BOOK FROM GOD

**The Bible comes to us from God.**

“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”—*2 Peter 1:21* (also *Acts 1:16; Hebrews 1:1-2*).

**The Scriptures were given so we can learn special truths God wants us to learn.**

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”—*2 Timothy 3:16-17*. (Also see *Romans 15:4* and *Psalm 119:105*.)

**Only in the Bible is there absolute truth.**

“Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth.”—*John 17:17*.

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.”—*Isaiah 8:20*.

How then can our confused minds understand and receive the heavenly light of God’s divine Book?

**Here are five simple steps which will prove a help to you:**

### 1 - PRAY FOR DIVINE GUIDANCE

**We need help in understanding God’s Word, and only its Author can give us that help.** We must ask Him for that guidance! Amid the terrible crises of life, we need help which only He can give!

**We must pray for divine guidance when we open and study God’s Word, and we must ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in order to understand the Bible.**

“Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.”—*Psalm 119:18* (also *Ephesians 1:17; Proverbs 2:3-5*).

“But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.”—*1 Corinthians 2:10-11* (also *John 14:26; 1 Corinthians 2:14*).

**The writing of God’s book, the Holy Bible, was inspired by His Holy Spirit;** yet “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God” (*1 Corinthians 2:14*). Therefore we need His Spirit to guide us. The Apostle Paul confirmed that this was the only way it could be done: “Now we have received . . . the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” *Verse 12*. And the promise is given:

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good

gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"—*Luke 11:13*.

**Alexander McLeod tells of two young men who crept at night into a factory** to discover the secret of a new machine that a clever man had invented, so they could make secret drawings of it and enrich themselves.

But while still in their hotel room, before heading across town to the factory, one of them saw a Bible on the table. Picking it up, it seemed to open in his hands to Exodus 20; and he read the Ten Commandments.

When he came to the eighth one, he could go no farther. Its words seemed to flash like fire, and smote his conscience. "*Thou shalt not steal.*"

Those men went home without the secret of the machine, but with the secret of personal power.

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy Word."—*Psalms 119:9*.

**We need special guidance so we can see aright.** God has warned us that, if we walk in the light of our own fire and the sparks of our own kindling, we shall lie down in sorrow (*Isaiah 50:11*). But if, trusting in Him, our blind eyes are opened, we shall with the psalmist "behold wondrous things out of Thy law" (*Psalms 119:18*). And we shall receive the help we need!

"The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him."—*Ephesians 1:17*.

"Holy Spirit, light divine, Shine upon this heart of mine. Chase the shades of night away, Turn my darkness into day." —*Andrew Reed*

## 2 - STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

**A curious-minded boy prowling about the house picked up a dust-covered Bible.** Addressing his mother, he said, "Mamma, is this God's book?" "Why, yes, of course," was her quick response. "Well, then," said the boy, "I think we might as well send it back to Him. We never use it."

Many will not permit any other article to be placed on top of a Bible, yet never lift a finger to open the Book that would get down to the very bottom of the greatest questions and problems of their own personal lives.

**We want to start digging into this holy Book. We want to search it in order to understand its deep truths. Here is guidance telling us how to begin our search:**

**Jesus said:** "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which

testify of Me."—*John 5:39*.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."—*Matthew 4:4*.

**Paul said:** "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth."—*2 Timothy 2:15*.

"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine."—*1 Timothy 4:16*.

"Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things."—*2 Timothy 2:7*.

**Isaiah said:** "Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read."—*Isaiah 34:16*.

**Jeremiah said:** "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart."—*Jeremiah 15:16*.

The truths in the Bible are to be read over and over again, shared with others, and repeated to our children.

**And, yes, don't forget your children! Be sure to teach them God's Word also!** The mother and grandmother of Timothy did (*2 Timothy 1:5*)—and as a result he grew up to become an hard-working missionary and pastor.

"From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."—*2 Timothy 3:15*.

A visitor found a young mother with her babe in her lap and her Bible in her hand. "Are you reading to your baby?" was the humorous query. "Yes," the young mother replied. "But, do you think he understands?"

"I am sure he does not understand now, but I want his earliest memories to be that of hearing God's Word."

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of learning God's Word all through life—beginning with our earliest years.

**We should compare one passage of Scripture with another as we study,** and ask God to send His Holy Spirit to guide us.

"For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little."—*Isaiah 28:10*.

In this way, we avoid drawing a wrong conclusion from the study of one text or some limited portion of the Bible.

The more we value God's Word, the more it can help us!

"Sing them over again to me, Wonderful words of life; Let me more of their beauty see, Wonderful words of life." —*PP Bliss*

## 3 - BE WILLING TO LEARN

**The story is told of a young man who came to the famous Greek scholar Socrates,** asking, "What shall I do to become a learned man?" Whereupon Socrates led him into a pool of water, plunged his head under, and held it there awhile. When the youth came up and got his breath, Socrates said, "When your head was under the water, what did you most wish?"

"Air," gasped the young man.

"Very well," answered the sage; "when you want knowledge as much as you wanted air, you will find ways to get it."

**Tragically, many do not want knowledge when it is revealed in the Word of God.** A closed mind is like a jug, corked and sealed;—you cannot get anything into it. "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still."

Someone has said, "If an angel brought a message of great wisdom that people did not want, few would be impressed. But they will readily accept a great speech by a man that tells them what they wish to hear and already know."

**One who would learn from the Bible must follow a different path.** Here is counsel from a humble man who was willing to learn:

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby."—*1 Peter 2:2*.

Of those in one town, Berea, in which he first opened the Word of God, Paul later said:

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so."—*Acts 17:11*.

The Bereans did not just listen; they began studying God's Book for themselves!

**Let a man pray, "Lord, save me I plead, deliver me from the sin of prejudice.** Keep my soul filled with the love and the grace and the power of God, and my eyes open to light."

*Study it through.* —Never begin a day without mastering a verse from its pages. *Make it your own.* —Never lay aside your Bible until the verse or passage you have been studying becomes a part of your being. *Work it out.* —Live the truth you obtained that morning throughout each hour of the day.

**Dr. George Washington Carver, the great black scientist of Tuskegee Institute, spent his life helping others.** For years he urged farmers in the Southeast to plant crops besides cotton, for if that crop failed all was lost. He finally persuaded them to plant peanuts. However, they raised more peanuts than they knew what to do with.

So Dr. Carver prayed for wisdom whereby the peanut might be put to new uses. His prayers were answered; and he discovered how to make oils, varnishes, colorings, medicines, and a hundred other

things from peanuts.

When invited to testify before a Senate Committee in Washington, D.C., he was asked, "Dr. Carver, how did you learn all these things?" He replied, "From an old Book." The chairman asked, "What book?" Carver answered, "the Bible."

Puzzled, a committeeman then inquired, "Does the Bible tell about peanuts?" To this Carver answered, "No, Mr. Senator, but it tells about the God who made the peanut. I asked Him to show me what to do with the peanut, and He did."

#### 4 - ALSO BE WILLING TO UNLEARN

**To be willing to give up an idea which we have long held, even though we now see it is contrary to Scripture, can be very difficult.** It is like getting a horse to back a heavy load up a hill.

We have many lessons to learn, and many to unlearn. Our fathers believed the world was flat and tomatoes were poisonous. It took them a long time to change their minds. Some never did.

Galileo turned a telescope, invented only a few years before in the Netherlands, upon the skies. It made objects seem thirty-three times nearer,—and helped him prove that the earth moves. But such news was a standing rebuke to the highly educated of his day. They said the world was flat, motionless, and the center of everything. Finally, he was summoned to Rome where, after four months in prison, he was set free when he agreed that the earth does not move. But under his breath he whispered, "But it does move."

**Only the Bible has the right answers. "What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord." *Jeremiah 23:28*.**

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them."—*Isaiah 8:20*.

But some still choose the chaff. Jesus uttered these significant words:

"Laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men . . . Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."—*Mark 7:8-9*.

**Old Edwin Rushworth had been a skeptic all his life,** but he resolved to read for an hour a day the book that he had so long derided. "Wife," he said, as he looked up from his first perusal, "If this is right, we are all wrong!"

He continued his readings for several more days. "Wife," he exclaimed, "If this book is right, we are lost!"

He went on reading, more earnestly than ever.

"Wife!" he said suddenly a few nights later. "If this book is right, we may be saved!"

And they were! Both of them.

## 5 - BE WILLING TO OBEY

**The fifth and final rung in the ladder to Bible learning is willingness to obey what we learn in the Scriptures.** God can give us the guidance we need—if we will pray for guidance; study diligently; be willing to learn, to unlearn, and to obey. Christ said this:

“If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself.”—*John 7:17*.

“But He said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it.”—*Luke 11:28*.

How simple, how fair! **God is telling us, “If you will choose to follow Me, I will show you the way.** If, more than anything else, you want to do My will, I will make clear to you whether a doctrine is true or false.” Nothing in all this wide world can take the place of absolute honesty with God.

**This fifth step of willingness to obey is the climax. It proves our sincerity in taking the four preceding steps.** When Jesus called Matthew as he sat in the taxgather’s booth, He said, “Follow Me.” What did Matthew do when he heard those words? “He arose, and followed Him” (*Matthew 9:9*).

This is what it takes. Nothing less, nothing else. **Christ is calling to you and me today:**

“If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”—*Matthew 16:24*.

Christ had His cross. We have ours. **The way of obedience to God’s Written Word is the way of learning the will of God.**

“I have more understanding than all my teachers: for Thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Thy precepts.”—*Psalms 119:99-100*.

**The Word of God, accepted into the heart and obeyed, will change our lives.**

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.”—*1 Peter 1:23*.

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy Word. With my whole heart have I sought Thee: O let me not wander from Thy commandments. Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee.”—*Psalms 119:9-11*.

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”—*2 Peter 1:4*.

“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.”—*Colossians 3:16* (also *1 Thessalonians 2:13; Psalm 107:20; Hebrews 4:12; Deuteronomy 8:3; John 6:57-58*).

**There is so much help and power and glory in the Bible that we never see unless we carefully, thoughtfully read it.** As an old Scottish shepherd was tending his flock in the springtime pastures, he came upon a man examining wild flowers in the grass through a magnifying glass.

The old man’s new friend plucked a tiny flower, placed it under the glass, and invited the shepherd to take a look. He did. He kept on looking. His lips quivered. A tear stole down his weather-beaten face.

“Why are you troubled?” inquired his friend.

“I was just thinking,” was the old man’s wistful reply, “as I looked at the gorgeous beauty of that little flower, how many thousands of them I have trampled under my heavy shepherd boots, and never paid any heed to them.”

“O Word of God Incarnate, O wisdom from on high, O Truth unchanged, unchanging, O Light of our dark sky. We praise Thee for Thy radiance, That from the hallowed page, A lantern to our footsteps, Shines on from age to age.

“It is the golden casket, Where gems of truth are stored; It is the heaven-drawn picture Of Christ, the living Word. O teach Thy wandering pilgrims By this their path to trace, Till, clouds and darkness ended, They see Thee face to face.” — *W.W. Howe*

## A POWERFUL, INDESTRUCTIBLE BOOK

**For centuries, men have tried to destroy the Bible, but it stands solid.**

**Voltaire** said the Bible was an exploded book. His theory is what exploded; for he has been dead over 230 years, and the Book is still here, read and loved by more people than ever.

Voltaire said that in 100 years, the Bible would be an outmoded and forgotten book, to be found only in museums. When the 100 years were up, Voltaire’s house was owned and used by the Geneva Bible Society as a Bible storehouse. Recently, 92 volumes of Voltaire’s writings (a part of the Earl of Derby’s library) were sold for two dollars.

**Ingersoll**, another skeptic, declared that the Bible would not be read in ten years. It has been long years since he died, yet the Bible today outsells any one hundred other books put together.

**Like a cube of granite, the Bible is right side up no matter how many times you overturn it, and it leaves its imprint everywhere it goes.**

This divinely inspired volume has been translated into more languages and dialects than any other book. Completed nearly two thousand years ago the Bible or portions of it may be read today in more than one thousand tongues, and it is the most up-to-date book in the world.

“Within this precious volume lies the mystery of mysteries. Happiest they of the human race, who

have received God's grace to read, to fear, to hope, to pray; to lift the latch and force the way. —And better had they ne'er been born, who read to doubt, or read to scorn." —*Sir Walter Scott*

**Someone has written:**

"The empire of Caesar is gone; the legions of Rome are mouldering in the dust; the avalanches Napoleon hurled upon Europe have melted away; the pride of the Pharaohs is fallen; the pyramids they raised to be their tombs are sinking every day in the desert sands; Tyre is a rock for fishermen's nets; Sidon has scarcely a rock left behind;—but the Word of God survives.

"All things that threaten to extinguish it have aided it, and it proves every day how transient is the noblest monument that man can build, how enduring the least word God has spoken. Tradition has dug a grave for it; intolerance has lit for it many a fagot; many a Judas has betrayed it with a kiss; many a Peter has denied it with an oath; many a Demas has forsaken it; but the Word of God still endures."

"Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door,  
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;  
Then looking in, I saw upon the floor  
Old hammers, worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had,' said I,  
'To wear and batter all these hammers so?'  
'Just one,' said he and, then, with twinkling eye,  
'The anvil wears the hammers out, you know,'

"And so, thought I, the anvil of God's Word,  
for ages skeptic blows have beat upon;  
yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,  
The anvil is unharmed—the hammers gone."

—*Author unknown*

"Hammer away, ye hostile hands; Your hammers  
Break; God's anvil stands."—*Samuel Zwemer*.

**The Bible is a never-failing fountain from which God's people, down through the ages, have dipped up eternal life.**

"We've traveled together, my Bible and I, When  
life had grown weary, and death even was nigh, But  
all through the darkness, while avoiding wrong, I  
found there a solace, a prayer, and a song."

**Other leaders before our time have found this treasure book of the ages, and dug deeply into its riches. Here is what some of them have said:**

**George Washington:** "It is impossible to rightly govern any nation in the world without God and the Bible."

**Daniel Webster:** "If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper, but if we and our posterity neglect its instruction and authority, no man can tell how

sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury our glory in profound obscurity."

**John Wesley:** "I want to know one thing—the way to heaven: how to land safe on that happy shore. God Himself has condescended to teach the way. He hath written it down in a Book! Oh, give me that Book! At any price, give me that book of God!"

**Dwight L. Moody:** "I never saw a useful Christian who was not a student of the Bible. If a man neglects his Bible, he may pray and ask God to use him in His work, but God will not be able to make much use of him."

**Patrick Henry:** "The man who once exclaimed, 'Give me liberty or give me death!' wrote 'There is a Book worth all others which were ever printed—the Bible.'"

**Abraham Lincoln:** "In addition to Christ, the Bible is the best gift God ever gave to man."

**David Livingstone:** "All that I am I owe to Jesus Christ, revealed to me in His divine Book."

**Dyson Hague:** "The depth of the Bible is infinite. Millions of readers and writers, age after age, have dug in this unfathomable mine and its depths are still unexhausted. You cannot gild gold. You cannot brighten diamonds, and no artist can touch with final touch this finished Word of God. The great accomplishments of this century can add nothing to it. It stands as the sun in the sky. It has the glory of God shining on its pages."

**H.L. Hastings has provided an able defense of God's book:**

"This wonderful volume is in reality a library, filled with history, law, ethics, prophecy, poetry, medicine, and perfect rules for the conduct of personal and social life. It contains all kinds of writing, but what a jumble it would be if 66 books were written in this way by ordinary men. Suppose, for instance, that we get 66 medical books written by 35 or 40 different doctors, bind them all together and attempt to doctor a man according to the book. Or suppose you get 35 ministers to write a book on theology and then see if you can find leather strong enough to hold the books together."

—*H.L. Hastings, Will the Old Book Stand?*

**Regarding the accuracy of Bible prophecy, Hastings wrote:**

"So long as Babylon is in heaps; so long as Nineveh lies empty, void, and waste; so long as Tyre is a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; so long as the great empires of the world march on in their predicted courses,—so long we have proof that one Omniscient Mind produced the predictions of that book, and that 'prophecy came not in old time by the will of man.'"—*Ibid.*

**A minister went far into a backwoods settlement to hold a meeting;** and it was necessary that he return late in the very dark night. A woodsman provided him with a torch of pitch-pine wood.

The minister, never having seen anything of the kind, said, "It will soon burn out." "It will light you home," answered the other.

"The wind may blow it out," said the preacher. "It will light you home," was the response.

"But what if it should rain?" "It will light you home."

And contrary to the minister's fears, the torch did last him all the way home. The Word of God is a torch placed into the hands of each one of us. But what if it rains? What if the wind blows? What if the fires of persecution come? If you will hold the torch high it will light you all the way home.

"We search the world for truth; we cull  
The good, the pure, the beautiful,  
From graven stone and written scroll,  
From all old flower fields of the soul;  
And, weary seekers of the best,  
We come back laden from our quest,  
To find that all the sages said  
Is in the Book our mothers read."

—John G. Whittier

#### **MY COMMITMENT**

Kind Father in heaven, I may not have spoken to Thee much in the past. But, just now, I want to start reading in the book which Thou hast given to guide our lives—the Bible. I want to learn more about Thee, Father.

And, just now, as I am about to begin the next chapter about Jesus Christ help me, as I read it, to begin to understand what He has done for my life.

In His name I ask this of Thee. Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—How to begin a new life in Christ, or, if you are already a Christian, how to deepen your experience with Him.

# Taking God's Hand

*How to Begin a Changed Life*

**A number of prominent writers were assembled in a literary club in London one evening in 1825.** The conversation veered to a discussion of some of the illustrious figures of the past, and one of the company suddenly asked: "Gentlemen, what would we do if Milton were to enter this room?"

"Ah," jubilantly replied one in the circle, "We would give him such an ovation as might compensate for the tardy recognition accorded him for his *Paradise Lost* by the men of his own day."

"And if Shakespeare entered?" asked another.

"We would arise and crown him master of song," was the triumphant answer.

"And if Jesus Christ were to enter?" asked yet another.

An intense silence followed for fully a minute. And then Charles Lamb spoke softly, "We would all fall on our faces."

**It is when we come into the presence of Christ that our lives are changed. We are told:**

"In that day there shall be a fountain opened . . . for sin and for uncleanness."—*Zechariah 13:1*.

That fountain is the precious blood of Jesus. **The sacrifice of Christ, made for sinners by His death on the cross, is the central fact of the gospel.** It is the blazing sun, around which all other truths revolve. Indeed, it is the very essence of the gospel; for, if it be taken away, nothing of the gospel remains. It forms the ground of faith, the very basis of the sinner's hope.

"There is a fountain filled with blood, Drawn from Immanuel's veins; And sinners plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains.

"E'er since by faith I saw the stream Thy flowing wounds supply, Redeeming love has been my theme, and shall be till I die." —*William Cowper*

The teachers of modernism have been trying to shut off the stream of Christ's precious, healing blood, which was shed for sinful men. By their skeptical theories, they seek to rob Christ of His divinity, His perfect humanity, and His power to save men. Yet if this fountain be successfully sealed, then is the doom of the world also sealed; and man will never be admitted to the Paradise of God. For "without shedding of blood is no remission" of sin (*Hebrews 9:22*).

But there are those who ignore the jibes of the worldlings about them, and press through to Christ.

**I have a question to ask you, which I cannot answer.** You cannot answer it. If an angel from heaven were here, he could not answer it. If the devil were here, he could not answer it. **The question is this:**

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" *Hebrews 2:3*.

Both angels and demons know that if we neglect the salvation offered us—we shall not escape!

We want to learn, just now, how we can neglect no more to take hold of such a great salvation!

## UNDERSTANDING GENUINE CONVERSION

**To the degree that a man is willing to enter this experience and continue in it, a complete transformation takes place in that person's life as he is born again.** This is genuine conversion. The new birth is as actual as the natural birth he had as an infant. The change is recognized both by the individual and by those who know him. The new birth affects the heart (that is, the mind), and it affects the daily life. It is produced by the Spirit of God as the newly converted person cooperates with Him.

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them."—*Ezekiel 36:26-27*.

**God did not originate sin, but He did originate a remedy for sin.** "Sin is the transgression of the law." *1 John 3:4*. But law is not the remedy for sin.

It is true, as the Apostle Paul proclaims, "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (*Romans 7:12*). But the difficulty lies in the fact that man is not holy and just and good. The man cries out, "We know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I" (*Romans 7:14-15*).

**Jesus wants to bring us into harmony with the rules of His moral government.** It is true that God's law is eternal, and no man or men can change or abolish it. "All His commandments are sure. They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness" (*Psalms 111:7-8*). The problem is that the law is eternal, but we are temporary. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever" (*Isaiah 40:8*). "For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (*James 4:14*).

David declared, "The law of the Lord is perfect" (*Psalms 19:7*). The evangelist, D.L. Moody, agreed with this when he said, "Now men may cavil as much as they like about other parts of the Bible, but I have never met an honest man that found fault with the Ten Commandments" (*D.L. Moody, Weighed and Wanted*, p. 11).

**The trouble is not that none can find one jot or tittle of fault with any of the Ten Commandments,—the real problem is that this moral code finds so many serious faults with us.**

**What, then, is the remedy?** It is always and ever the same. It was announced in Eden in these words: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and Thou shalt bruise His heel" (*Genesis 3:15*). Jesus told it to us in these words:

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—*John 3:16*.

**God gave us His Son! Only Christ could solve the problem. There is no other solution to the sin problem that we can find anywhere. There is no other way that we can become cleansed and live godly lives.** Only Jesus can provide all the answers.

The law is holy, and Christ is holy, "Who did no sin" (*1 Peter 2:22*).

The law is eternal, and Christ is eternal. "Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (*Micah 5:2*).

The law is perfect, and Christ kept that perfect law. "I have kept My Father's commandments." *John 15:10*. Said Pilate, "Behold, . . . I find no fault in Him" (*John 19:4*).

**God gave this holy, perfect, eternal Christ, of whose character the law was a written transcript, and whose life was a living revelation of that same law—to save you and enable you by His grace to keep that law!**

"Since the divine law is as sacred as God Himself, only one equal with God could make atonement for its transgression."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 63.

"Just now, your doubtings give o'er. Just now, reject Him no more; Just now, throw open the door; Let Jesus come into your heart!"—*Mrs. C.H. Morris*.

### THREE THINGS ACCOMPLISHED BY CALVARY

**There are three things which were glorified by Calvary:**

**First, Christ's death on the cross glorified the law of God.** God's holy law had to be safeguarded, and men had to be shown the importance of that moral law of Ten Commandments.

This law was "ordained to life" (*Romans 7:10*). Obedience brought happiness. Sin brought death. **Had it been possible for God to abolish His law, the problem of sin could have been solved without Christ's death. But since the law was a very transcript—written copy—of God's character, He could not change its principles without changing His own character.** This He would not do and will not do. Stealing, murder, etc., will always be wrong and evil in God's sight.

When someone jumps out a window, God will not protect him from the effects of the law of gravity. Likewise, **when we break His moral law, the Lord cannot change that law so we will not experience the consequences of wrongdoing. To do so would mean the destruction of His government, of which the law is the foundation!**

"Justice and judgment are the habitation [*Hebrew*: "foundation"] of Thy throne."—*Psalms 89:14*.

The law could not save men because "all have sinned" (*Romans 3:23*). Men could not save themselves. Angels were powerless to provide the needed help. **Since the divine law is as sacred as God Himself, only One equal with God could make atonement for its transgression.**

**Second, the cross glorified the love which God has for mankind, and for all His creatures.** God is love, and has always been love. But not until Calvary was the depth of that love so fully revealed. Satan had rebelled in heaven, and then, by causing our first parents to sin, had spread it down here.

**Far back in eternity, the Son had offered to lay down His life, if man sinned, to redeem those who would accept Him as their Saviour and obediently cooperate with Him in their restoration.** The Father had accepted this pledge.

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you . . ."—*1 Peter 1:18-20*.

Thank God every day for this love! He loves you! He loves me!

"O Love that wilt not let me go, I rest my weary soul in Thee; I give Thee back the life I owe, That in Thine ocean depths its flow May richer, fuller be."

—George Matheson

**Third, the cross glorified the value of each human soul.** When Napoleon was planning one of his military campaigns, Metternich, Austrian minister at the French court, remarked, "This campaign will cost a million men." To this Napoleon replied,

"What are a million men to me!"

Oh, how different is God than the evil, self-centered hearts of men! While on earth, Christ repeatedly demonstrated that God loves mankind and wants to save them.

**Every one who will let Him save him will be worth more to Him throughout eternity than all the treasures of the universe.** Those of us who accept this great truth, and submit our lives to God's guidance and control, will experience the truth of that surrender throughout eternity.

But, tragically, there are those who will still choose to be lost. Outside the gates of heaven, they will say, "The treasures of earth were but glittering sand, compared with what I have lost. Salvation in heaven would have been worth more than anything the world had to offer."

**Christ came to our planet to give His life a ransom for man, and He would have paid that price for just one soul.** He spoke of His concern for the *one* lost sheep, the *one* lost coin, the *one* lost prodigal. The cross of Jesus glorified the law of God, the love of God, and the value of a human soul saved in eternity. Have you been down to Calvary?

"In the cross of Christ I glory, Towering o'er the wrecks of time; All the light of sacred story. Gathers round its head sublime." —*Sir John Bowring*

**There is the remarkable story, from over two centuries ago,** of a Britisher who one day visited the slave market in Cairo, Egypt. He there saw a strong, intelligent young man about to be sold as a slave.

Scarcely realizing it, he found himself bidding against the other buyers. Up and up went the price, but finally the Britisher had purchased the young man.

His new slave eyed him with suspicion and anger, saying to himself, "Why should this man be free, and I a slave? If I get a chance, I will kill him and run away."

The owner then led him away a short distance and said to him, "I bought you to set you free." Hearing this astounding news, the young man wept and falling down, cried, "*Oh, let me serve you forever!*"

"All to Jesus I surrender, All to Him I freely give;  
I will ever love and trust Him, In His presence daily live."

**How thankful we can be that Christ, the divine Son of God, came down to our world to save us!** He is "Christ . . . who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen" (*Romans 9:5*). Adam Clarke, in his *Commentary*, wrote "This verse contains such a powerful proof of the deity of Christ; no wonder that the opposers of His divinity should strive with their utmost skill and cunning to destroy its force."

And they have. But we accept the Bible, and rejoice in the blessings it brings to us!

**There was a little girl who, although a child, had learned how to keep close to Jesus.** When asked how she did it, she replied, "It's just this way: Jesus is my Friend. He lives in my heart, and when Satan knocks at the door, I say, 'Jesus, please answer.' When Satan sees Jesus at the door of my heart, he says, 'Oh, excuse me, I came to the wrong door; and he goes away.'"

#### BEHOLD CHRIST AT CALVARY

**Behold Christ!** He lived for you (*Matthew 20:28*). He died for you (*1 Peter 2:24*). He offers pardon to you (*Isaiah 55:7*). He offers grace and power to you (*Hebrews 4:16*). He offers heaven to you (*Matthew 7:21; 5:3, 10*).

Do you hesitate and say, "I do not understand how these things can be?"

God did not say, "Whosoever understandeth the science and philosophy of the atonement of My Son on Calvary shall have everlasting life." He said, "Whosoever believeth in Him."

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." *Acts 16:31*.

The dying thief looked, believed, and received assurance of Paradise (*Luke 23:42-43*).

The living centurion, watching the dying Christ, said, "Truly this was the Son of God" (*Matthew 27:54*).

The sinful, conscience-smitten publican cried out, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (*Luke 18:13*).

David, who had sinned a great sin, pleaded, "Cleanse me from my sin." "Create in me a clean heart." —And God heard his prayer (*Psalms 51:2, 10*).

I tell you today: If you will believe, you shall receive! Do not trust to feeling. **Take your sins to the cross. Exchange them for forgiveness. Ask God to give you a new heart, and write His holy law upon it, that you may love it and keep it.** Believe that, as you have prayed in the name of Jesus, God does this. Surrender your all to Him. Make no reservation. Give all. Receive all that God offers you.

"These blessings we by faith receive; By simple, childlike trust; In Christ 'tis God's delight to give; He promised, and He must."

There is the old story of the man who wandered all over the world seeking true repentance. But to no avail. **At last he came to Calvary. There he found what he had been longing for.** There he heard a Voice saying, "You will always find Me here, and the way of the cross leads home."

Have you been down to Calvary and found out

why Christ was bleeding there? This is the first place you should always come to.

“O, never till my latest breath Can I forget that look; It seemed to charge me with His death, Though not a word He spoke.”  
—Isaac Watts

“Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom” (Jeremiah 9:23). Let not the scientist glory in his science, the philosopher in his philosophy, or the inventor in his genius. These cannot save us.

**Let the world go down to Calvary, find there repentance and regeneration.** When will the whole world go? Never. It will only be as individuals that any of us will go there. Salvation is not by masses but by individuals. From beginning to end, it is a personal matter between you and God. It involves individual surrender, individual obedience.

“Down at the cross where my Saviour died, Down where for cleansing from sin I cried, There to my heart was the blood applied. Glory to His name.”  
—E.A. Hoffman

#### ENTERING INTO THE EXPERIENCE

**The greatest question facing every human being is this: “What must I do to be saved?”** This question comes to every individual; for “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Man by nature is lost. No man has the slightest claim upon immortality.

When the jailer at Phillipi pled with the Apostle Paul, “What must I do to be saved?” Paul replied without the slightest hesitation, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:30-31).

Later this same apostle wrote to the believers in Rome. He declared:

“But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.”—Romans 10:8-11.

**An equally important question is this: What then must we believe about Jesus?**

**We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that He is able and willing to save from sin**—and to bestow upon His followers the priceless gift of eternal life. We must believe in Him as *our personal Saviour*. We must believe that He died for us *individually*, and that His death on the cross was the penalty for *our sin*, which He paid in *our* behalf.

**We must also believe that He is able to em-**

**power us to resist temptation; put away our darling sins; and live clean, godly lives.**

**Believing this, the next step is to bow before Him in utter repentance** for those sins; confess them to Him, and then believe with all the heart that He forgives and cleanses.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”—1 John 1:9.

Jesus is calling to us today:

“Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause Mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God.”—Jeremiah 3:12-13.

**Having accepted the pardon so freely offered through Jesus Christ, the believer must be ready and willing to follow Him by obeying all His commands and serving Him in the day-to-day life.** That is a description of a genuine Christian life. Jesus said, “Without Me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). We cannot repent and put away our sins without His help; nor can we obey His holy, Ten Commandment law without His help.

**We must accept the fact that we can do nothing to save ourselves.** Christ will change us from our previous sinful state to a new life of godly living—but only as we cling to Him daily and plead for His enabling strength.

“Consecration” is signing your name at the bottom of a blank sheet of paper and letting God fill in the space as He wills. It is total dedication.

“I felt His love, the strongest love, That mortal ever felt; Oh, how it drew my soul above, And made my hard heart melt!

“My burden at His feet I laid, And knew the joy of heaven. As in my willing ear He said, The blessed word, ‘forgiven.’ ”

**We already looked at one unanswerable question in the Bible. But did you know that there are yet two others?** Jesus asked them, and here they are:

“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”—Matthew 16:26.

The only safe response we can give to those questions is to fall down before God; repent of our sins; hand them over to Him to get rid of; and henceforth give Him our lives in humble, obedient service.

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”—Acts 4:12.

Just now, we may come to Him for cleansing

and the beginning of a new life with Him.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."—*Revelation 22:17*.

**"In looking thro' my tears one day, I saw Mount Calvary, Beneath the cross there flowed a stream of grace enough for me.**

"While standing there, my trembling heart, Once full of agony; Could scarce believe the sight I saw Of grace enough for me.

"When I behold my ev'ry sin Nailed to the cruel tree, I felt a flood go thro' my soul Of grace enough for me.

"When I am safe within the veil, My portion there will be To sing thro' all the years to come Of grace enough for me.

"Grace is flowing from Calvary, Grace as fathomless as the sea, Grace for time and eternity, Grace enough for me." —*E.O. Excell*

#### BIBLE SUMMARY

**Whether or not we cooperate with Christ in making the needed changes will affect our eternal destiny. Here is why:**

**Sin is transgression of God's moral law.**

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."—*1 John 3:4*.

"By the law is the knowledge of sin."—*Romans 3:20*.

**All have sinned.**

"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."—*Romans 3:23*.

**The right kind of sorrow for sin leads to repentance.**

"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."—*2 Corinthians 7:10*.

"For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin."—*Psalms 38:18*.

**We must confess our sins to God, and forsake them.**

"All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."—*Hebrews 4:13*.

"When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the Lord, and that person be guilty; then they shall confess their sin which they have done."—*Numbers 5:6-7*.

"But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out."—*Numbers 32:23*.

**If we truly repent and confess our sins to God, He will forgive.**

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have

mercy."—*Proverbs 28:13*.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us."—*1 John 1:9-10*.

"I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."—*Psalms 32:5*.

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."—*Isaiah 55:7*.

"There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."—*Luke 15:10*.

**After being forgiven, we should not return to those sins.**

"Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."—*Matthew 3:8*.

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."—*Matthew 6:14*.

"Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."—*Ephesians 4:32*.

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."—*1 John 3:14*.

**"Conversion" means to become changed. It is also called the "new birth."**

"Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—*Matthew 18:3*.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."—*John 3:3*.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."—*2 Corinthians 5:17*.

**The converted man lives a new life in Christ.**

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."—*1 John 3:9*.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."—*Romans 8:1*.

#### MY COMMITMENT

Kind Father in heaven, All that I've done in the past is known to Thee. In deepest humility of soul, I plead for forgiveness! I confess all that past to Thee. Take it all and make me Thy child. Just now. I accept Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour from sin. I yield to Him my life, henceforth to obey and serve Him.

If I begin to wander from Thy side, please send me warning—so I will run back to Thee right away!

I have to have Thee, Father! I dare not be separated!

And, just now, as I am about to begin the next chapter which will tell me how to remain close to my precious Jesus, deepen within me the conviction to remain by Thy side.

In Christ's name I ask this of Thee. Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—How to maintain a close walk with Christ, day after day. Heaven is worth it! Jesus wants you to have it!

# Living by Faith

## How to Continue That Changed Life

**Two infidels once sat in a train, headed to Chicago, discussing Christ's amazing life.** One of them said, "I think an interesting book could be written about Him." The other replied, "And you are just the man to write it. But set forth the correct view of His life and character. Tear down the prevailing sentiment as to His divineness and paint Him as He was—just another man among men."

The suggestion was acted upon and the book was written. The man who made the suggestion was Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll, the well-known agnostic attorney; the author of the book was General Lew Wallace, governor of the New Mexico Territory; and the book was *Ben Hur: A Tale of the Christ*, published in 1880.

In the process of constructing it, he found himself facing the unaccountable Man. The more he studied His life and character the more profoundly he was convinced that Christ was more than a man among men; until, at length, like the centurion under the cross, he was constrained to cry, "*Verily, this was the Son of God!*"

### A CHANGED LIFE AT CONVERSION

**At conversion, the entire life is regenerated and changed. The old carnal desires, the tendency to sin, and the love of the world become subdued. These are replaced by a desire to serve God and do right. Through the new birth men and women become "new creatures."**

**We are born again into the family of God.**

"Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—*Matthew 18:3 (John 3:3)*.

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."—*2 Corinthians 5:17*

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."—*1 Peter 1:23*.

"Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened [made us alive] us together with Christ."—*Ephesians 2:5*.

The promise of God is that if we "walk in the Spirit," we "*shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh*" (*Galatians 5:16*).

**Here is a passage from a Christian writer of many years ago, which clearly shows the remarkable transformation which occurs when this miracle of the new birth occurs:**

"A person may not be able to tell the exact time or place, or to trace all the circumstances in the process of conversion; but this does not prove him to be unconverted. By an agency as unseen as the wind, Christ is constantly working upon the heart. Little by little, perhaps unconsciously to the receiver, impressions are made that tend to draw the soul to Christ. These may be received through meditating upon Him, through reading the Scriptures, or through hearing the Word from the living preacher. **Suddenly, as the Spirit comes with more direct appeal, the soul gladly surrenders itself to Jesus.** By many this is called sudden conversion; but it is the result of long wooing by the Spirit of God,—a patient, protracted process.

"While the wind is itself invisible, it produces effects that are seen and felt. So **the work of the Spirit upon the soul will reveal itself in every act of him who has felt its saving power. When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life.** Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. **The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God.**"—*Desire of Ages, 172-173.*

**Changing a sinner into a Christian is a miracle of God's grace. The entire life is altered. He is "a new man."**—But this only happens because the man continually remains close to Christ, prays to Him, reads the Bible, and continually looks to Him for guidance in everything he does.

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels."—*Revelation 3:5*.

Whereas before the sinner delighted in the practice of sinful habits and indulgences, the Holy Spirit is now impressing him with better thought patterns. **Abhorring his former evil thoughts and actions, he now happily serves God and tries to help those around him.**

"He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today! He walks with me and talks with me Along life's narrow way.

"He lives, He lives, salvation to impart! You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart!"

—A.H. Ackley

When the surrendered heart is cleansed and renewed by divine power, Christ sets up His throne within. **Thus the converted sinner becomes a son or daughter of God. He becomes a member of God's family and now knows God as His loving Father.** He now lives to help and bless others

around him.

A doctor once found a little dog with a broken leg by the roadside. Taking the little fellow with him, he put the leg in splints and kept him until he was well.

But as soon as the dog was able to run about the house, he disappeared. "That's gratitude," thought the doctor. "As soon as he didn't need me anymore, he ran away."

The next day, there was a scratching at the back door, and there was the little dog. But another little dog was with him. And that other little dog was lame! The secret cannot be kept. It has to be shared!

### BEGINNING THE NEW LIFE

**What shall the new believer now do with his life?** He has been given a clean page. What shall he write upon it? **If he would retain the ground he has gained through faith in Christ, what kind of life must he now live?** Shall it be one of sin—which will return him to the chains of Satan's control? Or will it be willing, cheerful obedience to God's Ten Commandments?

**Here is the answer.** The Apostle Paul explains it to us:

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. **How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?** Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?

"Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, **even so we also should walk in newness of life.**

"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection:

"Knowing this, that **our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.** For he that is dead is freed from sin.

"Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God.

**"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."**—Romans 6:1-12.

**Converted men and women are not free to break the law of God.** True, they are free from its condemnation for sins of the past, which they were powerless to undo, but which God has now freely pardoned. But **permission has not been given**

**them to presume upon God's goodness by continuing in transgression.** To do that is to have the responsibility for one's past sins rolled back on him.

A man who never before kept the law can be forgiven and justified before God, but he cannot remain in this new, justified state without keeping it. **Unless, in the enabling strength of Christ he obeys God's moral law, the Ten Commandments, he will not continue as a genuine Christian;** for Christians do not return to their evil, vile ways of the past.

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."—1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

"But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."—James 1:22-25.

**The Bible is full of passages commanding God's people to obey His laws.** Here is what Jesus said:

"Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; **but he that doeth the will of My Father** which is in heaven.

"Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

"And every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."—Matthew 7:21-27.

**Christ warned men not to think that He had come to destroy God's holy moral law.**

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or

the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, **Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law**, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: **but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**—*Matthew 5:17-19.*

**Never forget that the power to live a godly life comes only through a day by day, moment by moment, reliance upon Jesus Christ for help!** Of ourselves, we can do no good thing. Here is the formula for successful living in Christ:

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."—*Galatians 2:20.*

#### **A LIFE WHICH OVERCOMES SIN**

**Strengthened by the enabling grace of Christ, we live clean, godly lives.**

"Ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him."—*1 John 2:29.*

"Now the just shall live by faith."—*Hebrews 10:38.*

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."—*Philippians 4:13.*

"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering."—*Colossians 1:10-11.*

**"Now the God of peace . . . make you perfect in every good work to do His will,** working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever."—*Hebrews 13:20-21.*

#### **A life in Christ overcomes sin.**

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."—*Revelation 2:7.*

"He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."—*Revelation 2:11.*

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."—*Revelation 2:17.*

"He that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations."—*Revelation 2:26.*

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels."—*Revelation 3:5.*

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the

temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name."—*Revelation 3:12.*

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."—*Revelation 3:21.*

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son."—*Revelation 21:7.*

#### **—What a glorious collection of promises!**

#### **A life in Christ is a victorious life.**

"Now unto Him **that is able to keep you from falling**, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen."—*Jude 24-25.*

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.

"Now unto Him **that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think**, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."—*Ephesians 3:14-21.*

**Christ enters the citadel of your heart, made vacant by the departure of sin and the demons which previously harassed you. Jesus takes control of your life. Having done this, He is "abundantly" able to provide you with all the help you need in resisting temptation and fighting the battle of faith** to keep praying, reading the Bible, and obeying His will. And then, as a victorious overcomer, you can declare:

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."—*Philippines 4:13.*

To us the promise is given:

**"Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him,** seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."—*Hebrews 7:25.*

At the end of his epistle to the Hebrews, Paul says it even more strongly:

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from

the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, **make you perfect in every good work to do His will**, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”—*Hebrews 13:20-21*.

Those who have the sweet, abiding presence of Jesus in their hearts will declare with David:

“**O how love I Thy law!** it is my meditation all the day.”—*Psalms 119:97*.

“Was it for crimes that I have done, He groaned upon the tree? Amazing pity! grace unknown! And love beyond degree!

“Well might the sun in darkness hide, And shut His glories in, When Christ the mighty Maker died For man, the creature’s sin.

“Thus might I hide my blushing face, While His dear cross appears, Dissolve my heart in thankfulness, And melt mine eyes to tears.

“But drops of grief can ne’er repay The debt of love I owe; Here, Lord, I give myself away; ’Tis all that I can do.”  
—*Isaac Watts*

#### CONTINUAL JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION

**What is the difference between justification and sanctification, and when does each occur?** Many are confused about this, but the answer is simple:

**Justification occurs when we come to God, ask for and receive forgiveness, and begin life anew with Him.** This is a daily experience in the new birth, and is renewed every day. Paul said, “I die daily” (*1 Corinthians 15:31*). This also is to be our experience each day.

We begin life anew each day through earnest prayer; and, as we pass through each day in Christ’s strength resisting temptation and doing what we know to be right, we continue growing spiritually. Each day we become more mature Christians: patient, kindly, helpful. **This daily growth in Christ is sanctification.** Thus we are covered by Christ’s righteousness. By justification, we are forgiven and accounted righteous. By sanctification, we are becoming more and more like Him whom we so much love.

**If we are betrayed into wrongdoing by the devil, we run back quickly to Jesus** and plead for forgiveness, and continue on the path which will one day lead us to heaven.

**Both justification and sanctification come from God and prepare us for heaven.**

“That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”—*Titus 3:7*.

“Much more then, being now justified by His

blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”—*Romans 5:9*.

“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.”—*Romans 1:17-18*.

“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”—*Romans 5:21*.

“All Thy commandments are righteousness. Let Thine hand help me; for I have chosen Thy precepts.”—*Psalms 119:172-173*.

“I know that His commandment is life everlasting.”—*John 12:50*.

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—*1 Thessalonians 5:23*.

“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.”—*1 Thessalonians 4:3*.

“Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”—*Romans 12:2*.

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever.”—*2 Peter 3:18*.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”—*Romans 12:1-2*.

#### MY COMMITMENT

Oh, Father in heaven, I thank Thee so much for holding me close by Thy side! There are so many temptations from the old life pressing upon me. But each time I begin to slip, I run back to Thee, Holy Father!

Help me to continue making steady progress in setting aside daily time, morning and evening, for prayer and study of Thy Inspired book, the Bible. Give me courage to obey Thee. I need Thee every hour!

And, just now, as I am about to begin the next chapter about how to deepen my prayer life, help me keep my eye steadily on Thee and the goal—eternal life with Thee in heaven someday.

In the name of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, I ask this. Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—What prayer can do in our lives—to make us strong, vibrant followers of Christ!



# Prayer and Thankfulness

*Two Powerful Helps in Your Life*

**How much does a prayer weigh? The only man I ever knew who tried to weigh one still does not know.**

Once upon a time he thought he did. That was when he owned a little grocery store over on the west side. It was the week before Christmas, just after World War I. A tired looking woman came into the store and asked him for enough food to make up a Christmas dinner for her children. He asked her how much she could afford to spend.

She answered, "My husband was killed in the war and I have nothing to offer but a little prayer."

This man confesses that he was not very sentimental in those days. A grocery store could not be run like a bread line.

**So he said, "Write it on a paper," and returned to his business.**

To his surprise, the woman plucked a piece of paper out of her bosom and handed it to him over the counter and said, "I did that during the night watching over my sick baby."

The grocer took the paper before he could recover from his surprise, and then regretted having done so! For what would he do with it, what could he say?

Then an idea suddenly came to him. He placed the paper, without even reading the prayer, on the weight side of his old-fashioned scales. **He said, "We shall see how much food this is worth."**

To his astonishment the scale would not go down when he put a loaf of bread on the other side. To his confusion and embarrassment, it would not go down though he kept on adding food, anything he could lay his hands on quickly, because people were watching him.

He tried to be gruff and he was making a bad job of it. His face got red and he was unsure what to do next. So finally, he said, "Well, that's all the scales will hold anyway. Here's a bag. You'll have to put it in yourself. I'm busy."

**With what sounded like a gasp or a little sob, she took the bag and started packing in the food,** wiping her eyes on her sleeves every time her arm was free to do so. He tried not to look, but he could not help seeing that he had given her a pretty big bag and that it was not quite full. So he filled another sack with beans and potatoes, and tossed it down the counter, but he did not say anything; nor did he

see the timid smile of grateful appreciation which glistened in her moist eyes.

**When the woman had gone, he went to look at the scales,** scratching his head and shaking it in puzzlement. Then he found the solution. The scales had broken.

The grocer is an old man now. His hair is white. But he still scratches it in the same place and shakes it slowly back and forth with the same puzzled expression. He never saw the woman again. And, come to think of it, he had never seen her before either. Yet for the rest of his life he remembered her better than any other woman in the world and thought of her more often.

He knew it had not been just his imagination, for he still had the slip of paper upon which the woman's prayer had been written: "Please, Lord, give us this day our daily bread."

## PRAYERLESS LIVES MISS SO MUCH

**Oh, my friend, how much we need prayer in our lives! We need it every day. We need it hourly.** The only footprints on the sands of time that will really last are the ones made after knee-prints!

**Some go a whole week without prayer, yet seven days without prayer makes one weak. Many only pray when they are in an emergency.** Such people seem to look upon prayer as a spare tire, something only to be gotten out and used when they are in trouble. Yet the truth is that there is immense strength in frequent prayer to God. The humblest saint can see further on his knees than the most learned philosopher can see from the world's highest eminence.

**How little we realize what a mighty force is the simple act of talking with God.** There is nothing which lies outside the reach of the hand extended up to heaven in prayer, except that which lies outside the will of God. Those who pray often and earnestly know well the depth of comfort and help they can receive from those precious moments with their Maker.

It is the name at the foot of the check which gives it value when handed to the cashier in the bank. Prayer becomes priceless through the name in which it is presented, regardless of how impoverished may be the one sending it up to heaven.

"More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." —Alfred Lord Tennyson

In the previous two chapters, we viewed the wondrous power of God at the moment of conversion, and as the soul begins a new life in Him.

**But there is a tendency with some to expect that all conflict will end at conversion.** They assume that the happiness and peace they experienced

in that initial coming to Christ will continue on, uninterrupted, month after month. For a time, there is a new power within, new strength to overcome weakness, and a sense of forgiveness that makes the person radiantly happy in his newfound faith.

But in the experience of many, this deep peace gradually fades away. Old temptations, old feelings, old thoughts, may clamor again for recognition. A man may yield momentarily to these old impulses. He may find himself suddenly irritable and bad-tempered. —Yet he thought he would never be that way again!

**What happened? What went wrong?** Let me tell you this, and let it sink deep into your thinking: *It was not God's fault.* We are quick to blame God for whatever happens. But that is the worst thing we can do, for doing so only deepens our separation from Him. **Fact one: God never errs or does anything wrong. Fact two: All our problems originate either with ourselves, our environment, or the devil.** God is always good. He permits trials to come, but He never does anything evil.

But now, back to our question: What went wrong? When you stop to think about it, the answer is quite simple. **How did you first find God? By humbling your heart before Him, pleading with Him for His help, and surrendering your life to Him.**

**Why did you later lose Him? You stopped walking with Him!** The prayer, praise, and thankfulness that you had when you first found Him had ended. Without realizing it, you had severed your connection with Heaven, and the devil quietly began moving back in and tantalizing your mind, and drawing you back to your old ways and former miseries.

**"If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways;** then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now Mine eyes shall be open, and Mine ears attend unto the prayer that is made in this place."—2 Chronicles 7:14-15.

**Christianity is living with Jesus. It is not something you do once in a while.** It has to be an ongoing experience, day after day, or it is not real.

**Face the fact: Do you really want to be with Jesus, or do you just want to live your own life and manage yourself?**

**In special gardens in Japan, you will find trees which should be forest giants, yet are only 12 inches high.** Each tree is a dwarf of what it could be. Its growth has been stunted—so much so that it is now smaller than a common bush.

The puzzle is solved when the gardener explains

that the taproots of these trees have been carefully cut back for decades, so they cannot grow normally. They are only supplied by nourishment from tiny roots which lie close to the surface.

**Many people live anxious, complaining lives because, for years, they have kept their taproots cut off.** They go through life, never realizing what they are missing. For it is the roots that feed the tree, and theirs are stunted. Such people live on their surface roots (their connections with those around them), while the taproots, which would go down deep into the soil, have been chopped off.

**When the great ocean liner, Titanic, was filling with water** on that fateful night of April 14, 1912, the orchestra switched from the dance music it had been playing for days—to a hymn of prayer: "Nearer, my God, to Thee . . . daylight all gone, darkness be over me . . . Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee!"

Why is it that people wait till they are confronted by a terrible emergency before they think of praying?

#### WHAT PRAYER IS

"Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him . . .

"Our heavenly Father waits to bestow upon us the fullness of His blessing. It is our privilege to drink largely at the fountain of boundless love. What a wonder it is that we pray so little! God is ready and willing to hear the sincere prayer of the humblest of His children, and yet there is much manifest reluctance on our part to make known our wants to God. What can the angels of heaven think of poor helpless human beings, who are subject to temptation, when God's heart of infinite love yearns toward them, ready to give them more than they can ask or think, and yet they pray so little and have so little faith?"—*Steps to Christ*, p. 94.

**The taproots of the soul, which connect you to God, are prayer, study of God's Word, thankfulness, and living to help those around you.**

"Lord, what a change within us one short hour Spent in Thy Presence will prevail to make! What heavy burdens from our bosoms take! What parched grounds refresh as with a shower! We kneel and all around us seems to lower, We rise, and all, the distant and the near, Stands for us in sunny outline, bright and clear, We kneel how weak, we rise how full of power!"  
—William Trench

**It is only by clinging to Christ that we are safe for a day or even a moment.** It is the decision to make Him first, last, and best in everything that brings that peace and deep joy into your life.

But, unfortunately, many only experienced that for a few hours or days when they first found Christ. Later on, by their neglect, they went back on out into the world.

During World War I, two men were crawling together through the darkness toward an advanced position in the frontline trenches. One whispered to the other, that they were approaching an outpost. But his comrade was unable to distinguish it in the darkness. Back came the reply, "Lieutenant, the best way to see in the dark is to get close to the ground and look up against the sky." Good advice for the dark days of life: **Get close to the ground—and look up in prayer.**

**Prayer is talking to God. That is simple enough. There is nothing complicated about it.** Prayer is something that a fervent Christian engages in quite frequently, when he is reading God's Word, is about his daily work, walking the streets, and driving down the road. **When alone, he generally prays out loud; but when others are around, he sends up silent prayers.** He prays for protection and for guidance. He sends up expressions of thankfulness and praise to God for all the blessings of life. He asks for help in knowing what to do next, how to find others he can help, and how he can help them in the best way. I can tell you that living this way results in very happy living.

He is putting God first in his life. He is fulfilling the words of Joel: "Turn ye even to Me with all your heart." *Joel 2:12.*

"I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go."—*Abraham Lincoln.*

When the first Atlantic cable was laid in 1850, great celebrations broke out on both sides of the Atlantic. Two great continents, which had been separated through the ages, were now united.

**When the deluge of sin first separated heaven and earth, a mighty cable of prayer was laid in the love of God, and never from that day to this has it been broken.** The tempted and tried of earth can communicate with the God of heaven! They can pray for help and they can receive help.

Prayer puts man in touch with God. It forms the connecting link between human weakness and God's omnipotent strength. "Out of weakness" a man is "made strong" (*Hebrews 11:34*).

**Conversion brings you into God's family, and you now have the rights of sonship.** Before you is a standing invitation to bring all your petitions and present them before your heavenly Father in full expectation that they will receive attention. The ear of God is bent to hear the faintest cry of His

children. His greatest joy is helping them, and He always knows when it is the best time to do this.

**One writer has said,** "Prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence" (*Steps to Christ*, pp. 94-95).

**Prayer brings definite results.** It was when Daniel prayed that God sent the angel to shut the mouths of the hungry lions. It was when Paul and Silas prayed that the doors of the prison were opened and they were set free. It was when Elijah prayed that God shut up the heavens, so that there was no rain.

"Prayer is not the overcoming of God's reluctance; it is the taking hold of God's willingness."—*Phillips Brooks.*

Concerning the power of prayer, the Apostle James declared, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (*James 5:16*).

Christ told us that men must ask if they would receive, seek if they would find, and knock if they would have the door opened (*Matthew 7:7*).

"This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us. And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him."—*1 John 5:14-15.*

**But we must ask according to His will.** He knows that it would not be best to give us some of the things we ask for.

**Every prayer that is made in simple faith is answered, but the answer is given according to God's understanding of the needs,** and not according to the asking. His wisdom is infinite, and His love is boundless. He loves His earthly children far too well to give them things that would be injurious to them. Therefore, **in His great love He sometimes says "Yes"; at other times He says "No"; and at other times He says "Wait."** The answer may be delayed, but it will be fulfilled in the best way and at the right time to work most for our eternal interest.

"God knows; He cares; He loves. Nothing this truth can dim. He does the very best for those Who leave their choice with Him."

In the 1960s, Billy Graham's wife, Ruth, told an audience of Minneapolis women, "God has not always answered my prayers. If He had, I would have married the wrong man—several times."

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow said, "What discord we would bring into the universe if our confused prayers were all answered! Then we would govern the world, and not God. And do you think we would govern it better?"

A child may see a beautiful, gleaming knife and plead his parent for it. His desire and request are

intense, but the parent knows that the bestowal of such a gift would bring danger and harm to him. So the request is refused.

"As parents may in deepest love Refuse their child's request, Our loving Father may say no; He, too, knows what is best."

**Although most prayers are not answered immediately, the prayer for forgiveness always is.** If you will let Him, He is determined to provide you with help to resist and overcome sin.

Prayer is the Christian's greatest and highest privilege. Through this means he is able to hold constant communion with the King of the universe. He is in touch with God. To him heaven's store of eternal riches is open. And to him the promise is given:

"My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."—*Philippians 4:19*.

**The reason many so-called prayers receive no answer is the fact that they are made all too casually.** They are *said*, perhaps *repeated*, but not *prayed*. Prayer to be real must become the breathing forth of the inner spiritual longings of the soul into the ear of One who is recognized as the heavenly Father.

It cannot just be a selfish asking for more things for ourselves, and it cannot just be a form to be repeated over and over.

Andrew Carnegie, one of the wealthiest men at the beginning of the 20th century, remarked, "What is the use of praying? I already have everything I want. What more could I ask for?"

A small boy, when asked if he ever prayed, answered, "Sometimes I pray, but sometimes I just say my prayers."

Another little boy said to his mother, "Mommie, I don't have to say my prayers anymore. *I know them now.*"

"If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend. He will speak His mysteries to us personally.

"Often there will come to us a sweet joyful sense of the presence of Jesus. Often our hearts will burn within us as He draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch.

"When this is in truth the experience of the Christian, there is seen in his life a simplicity, a humility, meekness, and lowliness of heart, that show to all with whom he associates that he has been with Jesus and learned of Him."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, 129-130.

## CONDITIONS OF ANSWERED PRAYER

**They had nearly reached the summit of the mountain high in the Alps.** Then, suddenly, they were there! Exultantly, the young man leaped up, but his guide immediately pulled him down, "*Get down! You're only safe here on your knees!*" In this life, we are only safe when we are frequently on our knees.

**God promises to hear our prayers.**

"O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come."—*Psalms 65:2*.

**God answers prayer.**

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"—*Matthew 7:11*.

"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"—*Romans 8:32*.

**Here is how to pray so your prayers will be answered in such a way, and at such a time, as God sees best.**

**In order to receive answers, prayer must be made in absolute faith.**

"Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."—*Hebrews 11:6*.

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord."—*James 1:5-7*.

**Another condition of answered prayer is implicit obedience to God's Word.** Unless we are willing to follow His instruction and live in conformity to His will, we have no claim whatsoever upon the least of His mercies.

"Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And **whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.**"—*1 John 3:21-22*.

**"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."**—*Psalms 66:18*.

"No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."—*Psalms 84:11*.

Solomon said it in even stronger words:

"He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination."—*Proverbs 28:9*.

But this, of course, is only reasonable. If men will not ally themselves with God by following Jesus' example of obedience to God's requirements, they are actually enemies of His and not disciples.

"He that is not with Me," said Jesus, "is against Me" (*Matthew 12:30*). This is the test. If we are with Him, He is also with us to bless and keep.

**"He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me:** and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."—*John 14:21*.

When we recognize the true character of God, as a God of deepest love, our deepest thanks pours out in words and songs of praise for His constant revelations of love and mercy to us,

"In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."—*Philippians 4:6-7*.

**True prayer must be accompanied with the spirit of forgiveness.** Jesus explained how serious a matter this is:

"But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."—*Mark 11:26*.

"When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."—*Mark 11:25*.

**The more we praise God, the greater strength we will have for our daily duties.**

"For the joy of the Lord is your strength."—*Nehemiah 8:10*.

"When we bless God for mercies we prolong them, and when we bless Him for miseries we usually end them. Praise is the honey of life, which a devout heart drinks from every bloom of providence and grace. As well be dead as be without praise; it is the crown of life." —*Charles H. Spurgeon*

As the armies of Napoleon were sweeping across Europe, one of his generals decided to attack the little town of Feldkirch on the Austrian border. A council of citizens quickly gathered. They knew that to defend themselves was hopeless. So, after praying, they decided to rejoice in God that He would somehow care for them. So they rang the bells of the church and sang praises to the Lord. The enemy, hearing the sudden peal, concluded that the Austrian army had arrived during the night. Quickly, they broke camp and fled; and, before the bells had ceased ringing, the danger had been lifted.

**Our prayers should often be sent up to God.**

"**Praying always** with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."—*Ephesians 6:18*.

"Rejoice evermore. **Pray without ceasing.** In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."—*1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*.

"**Evening, and morning, and at noon,** will I pray,

and cry aloud: and He shall hear My voice."—*Psalms 55:17*.

"And when He had sent the multitudes away, **He went up into a mountain apart to pray:** and when the evening was come, He was there alone."—*Matthew 14:23*.

"**Watch and pray,** that ye enter not into temptation."—*Matthew 26:41*.

"**Watch ye therefore, and pray always,** that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."—*Luke 21:36*.

**Every day should open and close with prayer.**

In the morning our prayer should be one of dedication, giving ourselves anew to God for the day's work and service, and asking His care and protection. In the evening, our prayer should confess our sins of the day, thank God for His mercies, and commit ourselves in childlike faith into His hands for the coming hours of darkness and sleep.

"The morning is the gate of day; But ere you enter there, See that you set to guard it well, The sentinel of prayer. So shall God's grace your steps attend; but nothing else pass through. But what can give the countersign, The Father's will for you.

"When you have reached the end of the day, Where night and sleep await, Set there the sentinel again To bar the evening's gate. So shall no fear disturb your rest, No danger and no care; For only peace and pardon pass The watchful guard of prayer."

Even the lowly camel can teach us important lessons:

"The camel at the close of day, Kneels down upon the sandy plain, To have his burden lifted off, And rest to gain.

"My soul, thou too shouldst to thy knees, When daylight draweth to a close, And let thy Master lift Thy load, And grant repose.

"The camel kneels at break of day, To have his guide replace his load; Then rises up anew to take The desert road.

"So thou shouldst kneel at morning dawn, That God may give thee daily care; Assured that He no load too great, Will make thee bear."

**We should often pray for others.** Oh, there are so many, both near and far, who need help!

**"All his thoughts of people gradually turned to prayers"** was the remark made concerning the missionary John Forman. How is it with you and me? Are we as faithful in offering up our pleas for God's help for others in need?

**I wish there was space in this book to quote ten or fifteen astounding stories of how God has answered prayer, but here is one:**

Dr. Harry A. Ironside, a powerful preacher in the early 20th century, told the story of an unsaved man

who had gone to sea. One night his mother awoke with a deep sense of need. A burden for her unsaved boy rested heavily upon her heart. She earnestly prayed for his salvation. After a time, peace came to her, and she went back to sleep.

Weeks passed. Then, one day, there was a knock at her door and there stood her son! "Mother, I've found Jesus!" he exclaimed joyfully. Then he told her what had happened:

"A few weeks ago, our ship was caught in a fearful storm. The waves seemed mountain high. Hope of our outriding the storm vanished. Suddenly the ship gave a lurch and I was swept overboard. As I began to sink, the awful thought came to me: **'I'm lost forever! Where will I spend eternity?'** In agony of heart I cried out, **'O God, I look, I look to Jesus!'** Then I lost consciousness. After the storm had abated, the sailors came up from below deck,—and they found me lying, unconscious, against a bulwark!"

#### **How fully will our kind Father provide for us?**

"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."—*Ephesians 3:20*.

"**But my God shall supply all your need** according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."—*Philippians 4:19*.

#### **FAMILIES NEED PRAYER ALSO**

**Not only is personal prayer important,—but family prayer is also.** If at all possible, you want to have family prayer and reading of God's Word every morning and evening. Set aside definite times for this, and you will be blessed—and everything will go better all day long.

**In the life of so many, prayer is often crowded out.** No longer do many children in Christian homes hear their parents praying for them, as at the family prayer circle each one is presented before God. Thus a mighty Christian influence is lost. Far too often, the children grow up and wander out into the world.

**Prayer involves thanksgiving.** Recognizing this great truth can make your prayers more powerful.

**Husbands and wives, prayer can change your marriage!** Robert Newton, a well-known nineteenth-century pastor, and his bride, began their married life by each going alone twice each day and praying for one another. When an old man, Pastor Newton said, "My wife and I have just passed our fiftieth wedding anniversary, and I knew not, during the past fifty years of our union, an unkind look or unkind word has ever passed between us."

#### **PREACHERS MADE POWERFUL BY PRAYER**

**Before closing, we should not forget the preachers. They should pray earnestly, both be-**

**fore and after their sermons.** It is because so many do not do this that what they present to the people is so devoid of life and strength.

A pastor, while watching a marble cutter at work, exclaimed, "I wish I could deal such clanging blows on stony hearts!" The workman replied, "Maybe you could if you worked like me, *on your knees*."

**Martin Luther** once said, "I am so busy now that I find if I did not spend two or three hours each day in prayer, I could not get through the day. If I should neglect prayer but a single day, I should lose the fire of my faith."

It is known that **John Wesley** regularly spent at least two hours each day in prayer. And **D.L. Moody** declared, "Every great movement of God can be traced to a kneeling figure!" Such are the kind of men who, in the past, accomplished things for God!

**George Whitefield**, the eighteenth-century evangelist, always took with him on his preaching missions a little crippled man who utterly believed in prayer. Very rarely did the crippled man attend the meetings. Often he did not leave his hotel room. It was his prayers, even more than Whitefield's preaching, which were the cause of the wonderful results which followed.

**John Hyde** graduated from McCormick Seminary in 1892 and then went to India as a missionary. **He had always sought the Lord earnestly in prayer for others. But, in India he saw such great needs that he spent even more time in prayer.** As a result, both his and his fellow missionaries who were working with him, were able to make many more conversions. Soon he became known as "Praying Hyde."

Dr. Wilbur Chapman wrote to a friend: "At one of our missions in England, the audience was exceedingly small; but then I received a note saying that an American missionary was on furlough from India and was going to pray for God's blessing on our work. He was known as Praying Hyde. Almost instantly the tide turned. The hall became packed, and at my first invitation fifty men accepted Christ as their Saviour. (Nearly all of these afterward proved to be genuine conversions.)"

"As we were leaving the hall that night, I said, 'Mr. Hyde, I want you to pray for me.'

"He came to my room, turned the key in the door, and dropped on his knees, and five minutes passed without a single syllable coming from his lips. I could hear my own heart thumping, and his beating. I felt hot tears running down my face. I knew I was with God. Then, with upturned face, while the tears were streaming, he said, 'O God.' Then for five minutes at least he was still again; and then,

when he knew that he was talking with God, there came from the depths of his heart such petitions for me as I had never heard before. **I rose from my knees to know what real prayer was.** We believe that prayer is mighty and we now believe it as we never did before.”

**It has been said that prayer is the greatest unused power in the world, and faith is the greatest undiscovered resource.** Oh, my friends, how much we need the strength and closeness to God which an ongoing prayer experience can bring into our lives!

#### **MY COMMITMENT**

Oh, my Father, which art in heaven. It is my desire to seek a far closer walk with Thee than I have had in the past, and I recognize that deepening my prayer time with Thee is a very important part. Please help me to begin today on this higher path. In Jesus' name I ask it. Amen.

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The next two chapters are summarized from the best single book that the present author has ever found on how to come to Christ and stay with Him. Reading them will provide you with an even deeper understanding of how to remain solid in your daily walk with Christ.

## Chapter Five

# Summarizing the First Steps

## How to Come to Christ

*Abridgement of the book, Steps to Christ,  
in the author's own words - in this and the next chapter.*

**Nature and revelation alike testify of God's love.** It is transgression of God's law—the law of love—that has brought woe and death. **Yet even amid the suffering that results from sin, God's love is revealed.** “God is love” is written upon every opening bud, upon every spire of springing grass.

**Jesus came to live among men to reveal the infinite love of God.** Love, mercy, and compassion were revealed in every act of His life; His heart went out in tender sympathy to the children of men. He took man's nature, that He might reach man's wants. **The poorest and humblest were not afraid to approach Him. Such is the character of Christ as revealed in His life. This is the character of God.**

**It was to redeem us that Jesus lived and suffered and died.** He became a “Man of Sorrows,” that we might be made partakers of everlasting joy. But this great sacrifice was not made in order to create in the Father's heart a love for man, not make Him willing to save. No, no! “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.” *John 3:16*. The Father loves us, not because of the great propitiation, but He provided the propitiation because He loves us. None but the Son of God could accomplish our redemption.

**What a value this places upon man! Through transgression the sons of man become subjects of Satan. Through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ the sons of Adam may become the sons of God.** The matchless love of God for a world that did not love Him! The thought has a subduing power upon the soul and brings the mind into captivity to the will of God.

Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being, and in harmony with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy. But through disobedience, his powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened through transgression that it was impossible for him, in his own strength, to resist the power of evil.

**It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them. There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed**

**from sin to holiness. That power is Christ.** His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness. To all, there is but one answer, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” *John 1:29*. Let us avail ourselves of the means provided for us that we may be transformed into His likeness, and be restored to fellowship with the ministering angels, to harmony and communion with the Father and the Son.

How shall a man be just with God? How shall the sinner be made righteous? It is only through Christ that we can be brought into harmony with God, with holiness; but how are we to come to Christ?

**Repentance includes sorrow for sin and a turning away from it.** We shall not renounce sin unless we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life.

But **when the heart yields to the influence of the Spirit of God, the conscience will be quickened**, and the sinner will discern something of the depth and sacredness of God's holy law, the foundation of His government in heaven and on earth. Conviction takes hold upon the mind and heart.

**The prayer of David, after his fall, illustrates the nature of true sorrow for sin.** His repentance was sincere and deep. There was no effort to palliate his guilt; no desire to escape the judgment threatened inspired his prayer. David saw the enormity of his transgression; he saw the defilement of his soul; he loathed his sin. It was not for pardon only that he prayed, but for purity of heart. He longed for the joy of holiness, to be restored to harmony and communion with God. A repentance such as this is beyond the reach of our own power to accomplish; it is obtained only from Christ.

**Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will.** If we refuse, what more can He do? Study God's Word prayerfully. **As you see the enormity of sin, as you see yourself as you really are, do not give up in despair. It was sinners that Christ came to save.** When Satan comes to tell you that you are a great sinner, look to your Redeemer and talk of His merits. Acknowledge your sin, but tell the enemy that “Christ came into the world to save sinners” and that you may be saved (*1 Timothy 1:15*).

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” *Proverbs 28:13*. **The conditions of obtaining the mercy of God are simple and just and reasonable.** Confess your sins to God, who only can forgive them, and your faults to one another. Those who have not humbled their souls before God, in acknowledging their guilt, have not

yet fulfilled the first step of acceptance. We must be willing to humble our hearts and comply with the conditions of the Word of truth. **The confession that is the outpouring of the inmost soul finds its way to the God of infinite pity.** True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins. All confession should be definite and to the point. It is written, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

**God's promise is, "Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart."** *Jeremiah 29:13.* The whole heart must be yielded, or the change can never be wrought in us by which we are to be restored to His likeness.

The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. **The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle; but the soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness.**

**In giving ourselves to God, we must necessarily give up all that would separate us from Him.** There are those who profess to serve God while they rely upon their own efforts to obey His law, to form a right character and secure salvation. Their hearts are not moved by any deep sense of the love of Christ, but they seek to perform the duties of the Christian life as that which God requires of them in order to gain heaven. Such religion is worthless.

**When Christ dwells in the heart, the soul will be so filled with His love, with the joy of communion with Him, that it will cleave to Him;** and in the contemplation of Him, self will be forgotten. Love to Christ will be the spring of action. Such do not ask for the lowest standard, but aim at perfect conformity to the will of their Redeemer.

**Do you feel that it is too great a sacrifice to yield all to Christ?** Ask yourself the question, "What has Christ given for me?" The Son of God gave all - life and love and suffering - for our redemption. And can it be that we, the unworthy objects of so great love, will withhold our hearts from Him? **What do we give up, when we give all?** A sin-polluted heart, for Jesus to purify, to cleanse by His own blood, and to save by His matchless love. And yet men think it hard to give up all! God does not require us to give up anything that it is for our best interest to retain. In all that He does, He has the well-being of His children in view.

**Many are inquiring, "How am I to make the surrender of myself to God?"** You desire to give yourself to Him, but you are weak in moral power, in slavery to doubt, and controlled by the habits of your life of sin. Your promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand. You cannot control your thoughts,

your impulses, your affections. The knowledge of your broken promises and forfeited pledges weakens your confidence in your own sincerity, and causes you to feel that God cannot accept you; but you need not despair.

**What you need to understand is the true force of the will.** This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will. The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. **You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can choose to serve Him.** You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him.

Desires for goodness and holiness are right as far as they go; but if you stop here, they will avail nothing. Many will be lost while hoping and desiring to be Christians. They do not come to the point of yielding the will to God. They do not *now choose* to be Christians.

**Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in your life. You will have strength from above to hold you steadfast,** and thus through constant surrender to God you will be enabled to live the new life, even the life of faith.

As your conscience has been quickened by the Holy Spirit, you have seen something of the evil of sin, of its power, its guilt, its woe; and you look upon it with abhorrence. It is peace that you need. **You have confessed your sins, and in heart put them away. You have resolved to give yourself to God. Now go to Him, and ask that He will wash away your sins and give you a new heart.**

**Then believe that He does this because He has promised.** The gift which God promises us, we must believe we do receive, and it is ours. You are a sinner. You cannot atone for your past sins; you cannot change your heart and make yourself holy. But God promises to do all this for you through Christ. **You believe that promise. You confess your sins and give yourself to God. You will to serve Him. Just as surely as you do this, God will fulfill His word to you.** If you believe the promise, God supplies the fact. Do not wait to *feel* that you are made whole, but say, "I believe it; it is so, not because I feel it, but because God promised."

# the Later Steps

*How to Remain Close to Christ*

Jesus says, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (*Mark 11:24*). There is a condition to this promise, that we pray according to the will of God. But it is the will of God to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life. So we may ask for these blessings, and believe that we receive them, and thank God that we *have* received them.

**Henceforth you are not your own; you are bought with a price.** Through this simple act of believing God, the Holy Spirit has begotten a new life in your heart. You are a child born into the family of God, and He loves you as He loves His Son.

**Now that you have given yourself to Jesus, do not draw back,** do not take yourself away from Him, but day by day say, "I am Christ's; I have given myself to Him," and ask Him to give you His Spirit and keep you by His grace. **As it is by giving yourself to God, and believing Him, that you become His child, so you are to live in Him.**

Here is where thousands fail; they do not believe that Jesus pardons them personally, individually. They do not take God at His Word. It is the privilege of all who comply with the conditions to know for themselves that pardon is freely extended for every sin. **Put away the suspicion that God's promises are not meant for you. They are for every repentant transgressor.**

Look up, you that are doubting and trembling; for Jesus lives to make intercession for us. Thank God for the gift of His dear Son.

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." *2 Corinthians 5:17*.

A person may not be able to tell the exact time or place, or trace all the chain of circumstances in this process of conversion; but this does not prove him to be unconverted. **A change will be seen in the character, the habits, the pursuits. The contrast will be clear and decided between what they have been and what they have become. Who has the heart? With whom are our thoughts?** Of whom do we love to converse? Who has our warmest affections and our best energies? If we are Christ's, our thoughts are with Him. **There is no evidence of genuine repentance unless it works reformation.** The loveliness of the character of Christ will be seen in His followers. It was His delight to do the will of God.

**There are two errors against which the chil-**

**dren of God especially need to guard: The first is that of looking to their own works, trusting to anything they can do, to bring themselves into harmony with God.** All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin. It is the grace of Christ alone, through faith, which can make us holy.

**The opposite and no less dangerous error is that belief in Christ releases men from keeping the law of God;** that since by faith alone we become partakers of the grace of Christ, our works have nothing to do with our redemption.

**Obedience is the fruit of faith. Righteousness is defined by the standard of God's holy law, as expressed in the ten commandments (*Exodus 20:3-20*).** That so-called faith in Christ which professes to release men from the obligation of obedience to God, is not faith, but presumption. **The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been - just what it was in paradise before the fall of our first parents - perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness.** If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized.

Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. **You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure.**

The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer. This is evidence that Satan's delusions are losing their power. **No deep-seated love for Jesus can dwell in the heart that does not realize its own sinfulness. The soul that is transformed by the grace of Christ will admire His character. A view of our sinfulness drives us to Him who can pardon;** and when the soul, realizing its helplessness, reaches out after Christ, He will reveal Himself in power. The more our sense of need drives us to Him and to the Word of God, the more exalted views we shall have of His character, and the more fully we shall reflect His image.

**The change of heart by which we become children of God is in the Bible spoken of as birth.** Again it is compared to the germination of the good seed sown by the husbandman. It is God who brings the bud to bloom and the flower to fruit. It is by His power that the seed develops.

As the flower turns to the sun, that the bright beams may aid in perfecting its beauty and symmetry, so should we turn to the Sun of Righteousness,

that heaven's light may shine upon us, that our character may be developed into the likeness of Christ.

**Do you ask, "How am I to abide in Christ?" In the same way as you received Him at first.** "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him." *Colossians 2:6*. By faith you became Christ's, and by faith you are to grow up in Him - by giving and taking. **You are to give all**, - your heart, your will, your service - give yourself to Him to obey all His requirements; **and you must take all** - Christ, the fullness of all blessing, to abide in your heart, to be your strength, your righteousness, your everlasting helper - to give you power to obey.

**Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work.** Let your prayer be, "Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee." This is a daily matter. **Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him**, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ.

**A life in Christ is a life of restfulness. There may be no ecstasy of feeling, but there should be an abiding, peaceful trust.** When the mind dwells upon self, it is turned away from Christ, the source of strength and life. Hence, it is Satan's constant effort to keep the attention diverted from the Saviour and thus prevent the union and communion of the soul with Christ.

When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power, save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie - to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. But **let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe.** Nothing can pluck us out of His hand. All that Christ was to the disciples, He desires to be to His children today.

Jesus prayed for us, and He asked that we might be one with Him, even as He is one with the Father. What a union is this! **Thus, loving Him and abiding in Him, we shall "grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ"** (*Ephesians 4:15*).

God is the source of life and light and joy to the universe. **Wherever the life of God is in the hearts of men, it will flow out to others in love and blessing.** Our Saviour's joy was in the uplifting and redemption of fallen men. For this He counted not His life dear to Himself, but endured the cross, despising the shame. When the love of Christ is en-

shrined in the heart, like sweet fragrance it cannot be hidden. **Love to Jesus will be manifested in a desire to work as He worked for the blessing and uplifting of humanity.** It will lead to love, tenderness, and sympathy toward all the creatures of our heavenly Father's care.

**Those who are the partakers of the grace of Christ will be ready to make any sacrifice, that others for whom He died may share the heavenly gift.** They will do all they can to make the world better for their stay in it. This spirit is the sure outgrowth of a soul truly converted. No sooner does one come to Christ than there is born in his heart a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus. **If we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, we shall have something to tell.** We shall seek to present to others the attractions of Christ and the unseen realities of the world to come. There will be an intensity of desire to follow in the path that Jesus trod.

And the effort to bless others will react in blessings upon ourselves. Those who thus become participants in labors of love are brought nearest to their Creator. **The spirit of unselfish labor for others gives depth, stability, and Christlike loveliness to the character, and brings peace and happiness to its possessor.** Strength comes by exercise. We need not go to heathen lands, or even leave the narrow circle of the home, if it is there that our duty lies, in order to work for Christ. **With a loving spirit we may perform life's humblest duties "unto the Lord."** *Colossians 3:23*. If the love of God is in the heart, it will be manifested in the life. You are not to wait for great occasions or to expect extraordinary abilities before you go to work for God. The humblest and poorest of the disciples of Jesus can be a blessing to others.

Many are the ways in which God is seeking to make Himself known to us and bring us into communion with Him. If we will but listen, Nature speaks to our senses without ceasing. God's created works will teach us precious lessons of obedience and trust.

**No tears are shed that God does not notice. There is no smile that He does not mark. If we would but fully believe this, all undue anxieties would be dismissed.** Our lives would not be so filled with disappointment as now; for everything, whether great or small, would be left in the hands of God.

God speaks to us through His providential works and through the influence of His Spirit upon the heart. **God speaks to us in His Word. Here we have in clearer lines the revelation of His character, of His dealings with men, and the great work of redemption. Fill the whole heart**

**with the words of God.** They are the living water, quenching your burning thirst. They are the living bread from heaven.

The theme of redemption is one that the angels desire to look into; it will be the science and the song of the redeemed throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. Is it not worthy of careful thought and study now? **As we meditate upon the Saviour, there will be a hungering and thirsting of soul to become like Him whom we adore.**

**The Bible was written for the common people. The great truths necessary for salvation are made as clear as noonday.** There is nothing more calculated to strengthen the intellect than the study of the Scriptures. But there is little benefit derived from a hasty reading of the Bible. One passage studied until its significance is clear to the mind and its relation to the plan of salvation is evident, is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view and no positive instruction gained.

**Keep your Bible with you. As you have opportunity, read it; fix the texts in your memory.**

**We cannot obtain wisdom without earnest attention and prayerful study.** Never should the Bible be studied without prayer. Before opening its pages, we should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and it will be given. **Angels from the world of light will be with those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance.** How must God esteem the human race, since He gave His Son to die for them and appoints His Holy Spirit to be man's teacher and continual guide!

Through nature and revelation, through His providence, and by the influence of His Spirit, God speaks to us. But these are not enough; **we need also to pour out our hearts to Him.** In order to commune with God, we must have something to say to Him concerning our actual life.

**Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend.** Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him.

**Our heavenly Father waits to bestow upon us the fullness of His blessing. What a wonder it is that we pray so little!** God is ready and willing to hear the sincere prayer of the humblest of His children. What can the angels of heaven think of poor helpless human beings, who are subject to temptation, when God's heart of infinite love yearns toward them, ready to give them more than they can ask or think, and yet they pray so little and have so little faith?

**The darkness of the evil one encloses those who neglect to pray.** The whispered temptations

of the enemy entice them to sin; and it is all because they do not make use of prayer. Yet **prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence.**

**There are certain conditions upon which we may expect that God will hear and answer our prayers:**

**One is that we feel our need of help from Him.** If we regard iniquity in our hearts, if we cling to any known sin, the Lord will not hear us; but the prayer of the penitent, contrite soul is always accepted. When all known wrongs are righted, we may believe that God will answer our petitions.

**Another element of prevailing prayer is faith.** When our prayers seem not to be answered, we are to cling to the promise; for the time of answering will surely come, and we shall receive the blessing we need most. But to claim that prayer will always be answered in the very way and for the particular thing that we desire is presumption.

When we come to God in prayer, **we should have a spirit of love and forgiveness in our own hearts.**

**Perseverance in prayer has been made a condition of receiving.** We must pray always if we would grow in faith and experience.

**We should pray in the family circle, and above all we must not neglect secret prayer,** for this is the life of the soul. Family or public prayer alone is not sufficient. Secret prayer is to be heard only by the prayer-hearing God.

**There is no time or place in which it is inappropriate to offer up a petition to God.** In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God and plead for divine guidance.

Let the soul be drawn out and upward, that God may grant us a breath of the heavenly atmosphere. **We may keep so near to God that in every unexpected trial our thoughts will turn to Him** as naturally as the flower turns to the sun. Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He is not indifferent to the wants of His children.

**We sustain a loss when we neglect the privilege of associating together to strengthen and encourage one another in the service of God.** If Christians would associate together, speaking to each other of the love of God and the precious truths of redemption, their own hearts would be refreshed and they would refresh one another.

We must gather about the cross. **Christ and Him crucified should be the theme of contemplation, of conversation, and of our most joyful emotion.**

We should keep in our thoughts every blessing we receive from God, and when we realize His great love we should be willing to trust everything to the hand that was nailed to the cross for us.

**The soul may ascend nearer heaven on the wings of praise.** As we express our gratitude, we are approximating to the worship of the heavenly hosts.

**Many are at times troubled with the suggestions of skepticism. God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith.** Disguise it as they may, the real cause of doubt and skepticism, in most cases, is the love of sin. We must have a sincere desire to know the truth and a willingness of heart to obey it.

*This ends this abridgment of the book,  
Steps to Christ, in the author's own words.*

#### **MY COMMITMENT**

Kind Father, help me to follow each of these steps, day by day, as I carry on my daily tasks and do what I can to be a help and blessing to those around me. In Jesus's name I ask it. Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—The amazing prophecy which predicted over a thousand years of world history! It is another evidence of the inspiration of God's holy Bible.

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— PART TWO —

**CHRIST'S SECOND ADVENT**

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*A Complete Evangelistic Sermon: Chapter Seven*

# The Prophecy of Daniel Two

*Modern Nations in Bible Prophecy*

**He was said to be the master man of destiny—an Italian by blood, a Corsican by birth, a Frenchman by nationality—Napoleon Bonaparte!**

Born in 1769, he grew to a stature of only five feet, two inches. Although thin-faced and round shouldered, he had one of the most rapid, clear-thinking, tireless brains ever to function, and a body that only required four hours of rest out of every twenty-four.

After winning battle after battle for the French, in 1799 he overturned the government and seized control of France. For the next 16 years, he won nearly every battle.

He established the Napoleonic order in Europe, placing his relatives in leadership and arranging marriages to cement the nations together. **But, without realizing it, Napoleon was smashing his fist against the prophecy of Daniel 2**, so he was bound to fail.

**On the morning of Sunday, June 18, 1815, two immense armies faced each other across a shallow three-mile wide valley in Belgium** close to the French northeastern border. Nearby was a little town no one had ever heard of before. It was called Waterloo.

On the eastern side of the valley was a large army, primarily composed of British soldiers under the command of the Duke of Wellington. On the western side was a far larger army under Napoleon. He had won every skirmish and battle in the preceding days. Wellington had sent a message for Blücher, with his Austrian army, to come as quickly as possible. But, slow to respond, he still had not arrived. The situation looked hopeless for those trying to resist the French forces.

**But, because God had spoken nearly 2,300 years earlier in Scripture, Napoleon would not be able to become master of Europe.**

It had rained heavily overnight on the 17th, so Napoleon delayed starting the battle until noon on the 18th, to allow the ground to dry out. Because the

ground was still too saturated, he could not move up to the front. His cavalry (armed horsemen) were still not useable. So repeatedly, for the rest of that day, he sent wave after wave of foot soldiers across the valley. Although many were wounded and dying on both sides, the British were narrowly able to repulse them and hold their position.

Then, late in the afternoon, Wellington gave the signal: Riding on his horse along the eastern ridge, he repeatedly waved his hat. This was the signal for the counterattack. The entire British army (many of whom had been hidden from the French behind the ridge) headed through the valley toward the French lines.

Meanwhile, unbeknown to both, Blücher suddenly arrived with his army from the south just at that moment. —And his forces broke through Napoleon's right flank, adding their weight to the attack. Losses were heavy on all sides.

**As they began to be driven back, a strange panic seized the French.** It was in vain that Napoleon tried to stop their flight. His army was in total rout.

Leaving the battlefield in total disarray, the French fled to their homes, wherever they might be in France. Napoleon rode a horse back to Paris, but was unable to prevent Coalition forces from entering France and restoring King Louis XVIII to the French throne. Exiled to Saint Helena, Napoleon died six years later in 1821.

**When, in his earlier years, someone told Napoleon that divine Providence would not permit him to rule all Europe, he replied, "Providence is on the side with the heaviest artillery."** He had the heaviest artillery, and the largest army. But God's warm June rains came, and the heaviest artillery could not move. His fine cavalry (horsemen) could only slog slowly through the soaked roads. And then Blücher arrived at exactly the right moment to help throw Napoleon's forces into disarray.

**God had said that, before the arrival of the Stone Kingdom, "the kingdom shall be divided" (Daniel 2:41).** When God speaks, His Word stands.

## THE REMARKABLE DREAM

**This chapter contains God's preview of the nations, extending down to our own time—2,500 years of world history in a few brief sentences. It was written over five centuries before Christ was born**, at a time when, because of its apostasy, Jerusalem had been captured by the Babylonians and many of leading Hebrews had been carried captive to Babylon. One of them was a young man named Daniel.

Because he and his three friends were faithful

and obedient to God in the midst of corruption and idolatry, God chose to reveal through him the future to Nebuchadnezzar, the king who ruled over most of the then-known world.

**One night, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that greatly disturbed him.** But the next morning he could neither remember it nor understand what it meant. So he ordered all his pagan astrologers and soothsayers to tell him the dream and its meaning. But, of course, they could not do this.

No one, of course, could tell the king what it was that he had dreamed. Enraged, Nebuchadnezzar ordered many people in the palace to be slain, including Daniel and his three Hebrew friends.

Upon learning about the crisis, they asked for time to pray about it. **That night, in vision, Daniel was shown both the king's dream and its meaning.**

The next morning, the four young men knelt and thanked God for revealing the matter to Daniel. In his prayer of thanks, Daniel said:

"Blessed be the name of God forever and ever: for wisdom and might are His: And He changeth the times and the seasons: He removeth kings, and setteth up kings: He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding."—*Daniel 2:20-21*.

**He then went to the king and told him the dream and the interpretation.** Recognizing immediately that it was that exact dream, Nebuchadnezzar knew the interpretation was correct.

As a result of this incident, Daniel was given one of the highest positions in the empire, and his three friends were also placed in leading offices.

You will want to read the whole story in Daniel 2. *We shall now begin with verse 28.*

**Daniel, God's prophet, told the king that it was only through the direct power of God, that the dream and its meaning could be told to him.**

"But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these."—*Daniel 2:28*.

**Daniel was about to explain to the king about four great world powers,** beginning with Babylon itself.

The vision which had been given to the king was simple. It portrayed a gigantic statue of a man, most of which was composed of various metals.

"Thou, O king, sawest, and beheld a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of

clay."—*Daniel 2:31-33*.

**But then, in his dream, the king had seen something very unusual happen to that giant metal image!**

"Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."—*Daniel 2:34-35*.

As he heard all this, the dream immediately came back to the king's memory. He had been thinking about the future, and planning for his kingdom. Babylon was, at that time, the greatest nation on earth. Nebuchadnezzar had renewed and rebuilt the city into its present state, and he was quite proud of what he had done.

In verses 37 to 43, Daniel explained that **this dream revealed future events, which would extend down even to our own time.** One nation would arise after another.

**But finally, according to the dream and its interpretation, the God of heaven would step in and eliminate all the kingdoms of the world! He would set up an incorruptible kingdom which would last forever!** What a promise is that for us today who live at the end-time of this master Bible prophecy!

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but **it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.**

"Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."—*Daniel 2:45*.

**King Nebuchadnezzar was astounded by this revelation of future events.**

"The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret.

"Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.

"Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king."—*Daniel 2:2:47-49*.

Daniel had told the king, "Thou art this head of gold" (*Daniel 2:38*), and that other kingdoms would arise after his monarchy (*verses 39-40*).

Well, that was nice to hear. But the prophet had also told the king, "After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee" (*Daniel 2:39*). That shattered Nebuchadnezzar's hope of having an endless kingdom. God had different plans for the future.

#### THE FOUR GREAT EMPIRES

*Let us briefly consider these kingdoms:*

##### BABYLON

**Babylon was the first of what history knows as the four great monarchies.** Its glorious capital was laid out in a perfect square, 15 miles on each side; a total of sixty miles around its walls—which are said to have been over 300 feet high and wide enough on top for five chariots to race abreast.

Gleaming in the sun, its lofty palaces and temple towers stabbed the sky above the towering walls and massive fortifications. Through the city flowed the river Euphrates, flanked by great inner walls and giant brass gates. The streets of the city were broad and straight, crossing at right angles. The famous Hanging Gardens were here, rising terrace upon terrace, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

**But God through Daniel said that Babylon, the "head of gold," was to pass away.** The prophet Isaiah had also predicted it.

"Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. **It shall never be inhabited**, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there."—*Isaiah 13:19-21*.

"And Babylon shall become heaps, . . . **without an inhabitant**."—*Jeremiah 51:37*.

"Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein: and **it shall be no more inhabited forever**; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation."—*Jeremiah 50:39*.

In 1845, and again in 1850, the famous archaeologist Layard explored the site where Babylon had once been. This is how he described what he saw:

"Shapeless heaps of rubbish cover the face of the land . . . On all sides, fragments of glass, marble, pottery, and inscribed brick are mingled with the pitrous and blanched soil, which destroys vegeta-

tion, and renders the site of Babylon a naked and hideous waste. Owls start from the scanty thickets, and the foul jackal skulks through the furrows."—*Austen H. Layard, Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon (1853), p. 484*.

If you go to Iraq today, you will find a town called "Babylon." **But it is located several miles from the ancient city.** This is because an Arab superstition forbids any of them from staying in the rubble-strewn remains of the ancient city overnight. The Babylonian Empire, pride of the nations, had gone down into oblivion; never again to be inhabited or rebuilt.

##### MEDO-PERSIA

**Through the prophet Isaiah, God had predicted exactly how the city of Babylon would be captured, and the name of the man who would conquer it—nearly 200 years before it happened!**

About the year 712 B.C., God declared in Isaiah 45:1-3 that the "gates of brass" in the river, which passed through the middle of the city, would be left open for the armies of a man named "Cyrus" to enter and take the city. It was also predicted that he would permit the Israelites to return to their home in Palestine. —*And that is exactly what happened!*

Daniel later showed Cyrus the prophecy and he decided to fulfill the prediction that he would let the Hebrews return to Jerusalem. His decree is found in the book of Ezra, chapter one.

**Cyrus' general, Darius the Mede, conquered the city in 538 B.C. while Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, Belshazzar was having a riotous feast.** The story of the conquest is told in the fifth chapter of Daniel. This occurred about 65 years after the dream of Daniel 2.

The new empire was called Medo-Persia, because young Cyrus had grown up in the Median province of Persia, then conquered the entire kingdom—and led his forces to subjugate the other nations of the Near East, including the Babylonian Empire.

In a different prophecy, nearly 200 years earlier, about the year 712 B.C., God through Isaiah also predicted that "Media" would be the nation which would conquer Babylon (*Isaiah 13:17-19*).

**The "head of gold" (*Daniel 2:32, 37-38*) had been replaced by the second kingdom, represented by the "breast and arms of silver" (*Daniel 2:32, 39*).** This silver kingdom of Medo-Persia (which became known as the "Persian Empire") maintained supremacy for 207 years (538-331 B.C.)

##### GREECE

**In 331 B.C., Persia was conquered by Alexander the Great at the Battle of Arbela.** After conquering Greece, Alexander had headed eastward

and rather quickly became ruler of the entire Near East. His army did not stop until it had subjugated most of India. **Known as the Grecian Empire, this was the “kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth”** (*Daniel 2:39, also 32*).

The rapidity with which Alexander, with his trained Greek phalanxes, made conquest after conquest was amazing. After only eight years (334-330 B.C.) he annexed an area a little less than 2 million square miles, containing a population of more than 20 million persons.

**Returning from India, Alexander stopped in the ruins of Babylon and planned to rebuild the city (which God had predicted would never be rebuilt). But then he suddenly died.** During a drunken orgy which lasted several days, Alexander contracted a violent fever and died eleven days later from this, on June 13, 323 B.C., at the age of 33. Immediately, his generals began fighting among themselves for control of the empire. Within 22 years (by 301 B.C.), his empire was divided among four of the generals.

#### ROME

**But gradually, a nation in the west, called Rome, kept enlarging its territory.** After the Battle of Pydna in Macedonia in 168 B.C., no power in the world was strong enough to withstand the Roman legions. That is considered to be the date when Rome became the next great empire. It was **“the legs of iron”** (*Daniel 2:33*), and was known as the “iron kingdom.”

“The fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.”—*Daniel 2:40*.

In describing the ongoing Roman conquests, the eighteenth-century historian, J.W. Edward Gibbon, uses the very imagery that we find in the vision of Daniel 2:

“The arms of the republic, sometimes vanquished in battle, always victorious in war, advanced with rapid steps to the Euphrates, the Danube, the Rhine, and the ocean; and the images of *gold* or *silver*, or *brass*, that might serve to represent the nations and their kings, were successfully broken by the *iron* monarchy of Rome.”—*Gibbon, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Chap. 38, par. 1. Italics ours.*

The empire of the Caesars reached from the Rhine and the Danube on the north to the burning sands of the Sahara on the south. It was an immense empire, bound together by its excellent system of roads and laws. Over these roads, the first Apostles carried the good news of Christ. Greek was the common language of the empire.

Rome, known as the “iron monarchy,” ruled for nearly 600 years. Jesus was born in this era and was crucified under Rome’s authority.

#### THE TEN DIVISIONS

**But Daniel had predicted that this fourth empire would be split into ten divisions—the toes, partly of iron and partly of clay.**

“And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters’ clay, and part of iron, **the kingdom shall be divided**; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.”—*Daniel 2:41*.

This division (also predicted in Daniel 7; more on that later in this book), occurred in the century preceding A.D. 476, as tribes from central Europe kept invading it. The Roman empire was broken into fragments by the barbarian invasions of the fourth and fifth centuries.

The ten main divisions, corresponding to the ten toes, are given as the *Alamanni* (Germans), the *Franks* (French), the *Burgundians* (Swiss), the *Suevi* (Portuguese), the *Saxons* (English), the *Visigoths* (Spanish), the *Lombards* (Italians), the *Huruli*, the *Vandals*, and the *Ostrogoths*. (Later in our study of Daniel 7, we will later learn that God predicted that these last three tribes would be uprooted and destroyed.)

Gradually, these tribes began having victories against Roman forces as early as A.D. 351. History gives A.D. 476 as the date of Rome’s fall, when Emperor Augustulus (Little Augustus) was deposed.

**The modern nations of Europe developed from these barbarian tribes of the old Roman Empire.** As predicted, some were to be strong and some weak. Thus it has been and continues to be.

“And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.”—*Daniel 2:42*.

We have learned that the Bible declares with the utmost simplicity and clarity that the European nations of our time cannot be permanently united by warfare, or in any other way.

**Repeated efforts have been made to unite the nations of Europe by royal marriages. But, as predicted, they have all failed.**

“And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but **they shall not cleave one to another**, even as iron is not mixed with clay.”—*Daniel 2:43*.

Before World War I, practically all the kings and rulers of Europe were related. Yet family ties failed to prevent the outbreak of that terrible conflict.

#### SIX WHO TRIED TO BREAK THE PROPHECY

**Of the many men who, down through the centuries, tried to reunite Europe into one mammoth kingdom, six especially stand out:**

**Charlemagne** tried to restore the original empire by welding its fragments together into, what he called, a “holy Roman empire.” But it miserably failed. Voltaire, a witty infidel later said it was neither holy nor Roman nor an empire. Weary from nearly half a century of fighting all over Europe, Charlemagne could not make the clay and iron fuse together.

**Charles V** also tried it without success, and wore out his life battling Protestantism. He ended up in a monastery, trying to make a number of clocks run together.

**Louis XIV** of France tried it and deluged Europe in blood.

**Napoleon** the Great tried it, but his glory vanished at Waterloo.

Then **Kaiser Wilhelm II** said he was determined to restore all Europe into the one empire. World War I was the disastrous result.

**Adolf Hitler** followed, declaring that his new *Third Reich* would last “a thousand years.”

Europe has repeatedly been drenched in blood in efforts to unite the nations, but it remains divided.

In addition to the six, more recently, the **League of Nations**, and then the **United Nations**, have tried to bring these nations together. Men may wonder whether there will be success, but God’s Word says, **“They shall not cleave one to another.” Those seven words form a barrier to every dream of world conquest.** No plan to rule the world will succeed.

The **European Union** is the latest attempt—but God’s decree will not be broken. The nations of Europe will not be able to stick together!

“In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the Word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will.”—*Prophets and Kings*, 499-500.

#### **A KINGDOM AS DURABLE AS ROCK**

**Four-fifths of the prophecy of Daniel 2 has been fulfilled; the last fifth will also be fulfilled—the setting up of Christ’s kingdom.** For it is written:

“And in the days of these kings [that is, in the days of the kingdoms of Western Europe: Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Switzer-

land, Belgium, etc.] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”—*Daniel 2:44*.

**Think of it! In the days of these broken fragments of mighty Rome, called the nations of Western Europe—in their day, while they are still nations, God will actually set up His kingdom!** “It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.” *Daniel 2:44*.

This is a tremendous prophecy!

#### **CERTAINTY OF THE PREDICTION**

**In this basic prophecy of the Bible, six facts stand out:** (1) There is a God in heaven. (2) He has servants on earth. (3) His hand is in earthly affairs. (4) He predicted the history of the world from Babylon—580 years before Christ—on down to our own time. (5) He forecast man’s failure, in every instance, to truly unite the nations of the world. (6) God’s glorious and eternal kingdom is to be set up—in the process of destroying all the kingdoms of mankind. **—Today we live in the feet and toes of history!**

**We are now awaiting the Kingdom of Stone.**

“The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever.”—*Revelation 11:15*.

It will smite the image and fill the whole earth (*Daniel 2:35*). We are told that it is cut out of a mountain “without hands”—that is, without human intervention. It is of divine origin. It smites the image on the feet. Notice that it will fill the whole earth.

**Someone may ask, “Is this really likely to happen?” In answer, we read verse 45: “The dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.”**

The kingdom of God will be set up by no human agencies or powers. **Christ will appear the second time, as He has promised, and the history of earthly empires will end.** The destruction of sin and a world where there is no death, no sorrow, no battles, no disease, will in God’s own time be a reality. This dream of the ages will be the kingdom of eternal peace.

**We must remember that this remarkable prophetic dream of Daniel 2 is part of the Holy Scriptures.** In briefest form, but with great clearness, it outlines the successive world empires from the time of Nebuchadnezzar, down to the setting up of Christ’s everlasting kingdom.

How can we be sure of that statement? because of verse 44, which are the words of the prophet as he continued speaking to the king:

**“And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never**

**be destroyed:** and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”—*Daniel 2:44*.

**Christ gave us more information about this Stone,—which is Himself. This is what Christ said about it:**

“**The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head** of the corner. Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”—*Luke 20:17-18*.

**Are you willing to fall in submission upon that Stone,** the foundation of the God’s eternal church? Are you willing to be broken upon Jesus Christ? We must know Him now in order to meet Him in peace. **Jesus, the King of the ages, wants to be the King of your heart.** Then you can truly pray: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” *Matthew 6:10*.

**As we near the end of this chapter, here is another story about Waterloo:**

For long, dreary years, England had fought against Napoleon. Then came that final battle in that valley near Waterloo. Everything was at stake. Because there was no telegraph, telephone, or radio, news could only be sent by a living messenger or, if the weather was clear, by semaphore. These were hand-waved flags which gradually spelled out words.

The news of the battle reached England by a sailing vessel which, landing on the far south coast, was carried overland by semaphore to the top of Winchester Cathedral, and on to London.

Suddenly, the flags could be seen and **slowly the words were spelled out: “W-e-l-l-i-n-g-t-o-n-d-e-f-e-a-t-e-d.”**

Then the fog reappeared. “*Wellington defeated!*” Hope changed to despair as the darkness of night closed in. Orders were given to fortify the roads and the bridges, and plans were made for entrenchments along the coast.

But near noon the next day, the fog lifted again, and once again the semaphore was seen: “*Wellington defeated Napoleon at Waterloo!*” Fear changed to joy, defeat to victory! The tyrant had been overthrown, a new age had dawned for Europe.

**It was dark at Calvary, and apparently Satan had gained a great victory over the world,** for he had slain the Redeemer who had come to save mankind.

**Although crucified in weakness, Christ arose in strength, with the message, “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations”** (*Matthew 28:18-19*).

**The message, “Christ defeated,” had been**

**changed to “Christ defeated Satan at Calvary!”**

It is now victory for all who will accept Him! It is victory for the entire universe!

**That recalls to mind Queen Victoria, who was about to visit the castle of Lord Leicester** in the midlands of the British Isles. As she stepped across the threshold, in her honor the great timepiece of the castle was stopped, never again to be started, forever marking the moment of her arrival.

**The King of the universe is about to step across the threshold of time, when He arrives. Every clock, every watch, every timepiece the world around, will be forever stopped,** never to be started again. Time will turn on its hinge and become eternity!

**Will you place yourself on God’s side? This is the moment to decide. Eternity has no clock.** The decision that will determine your destiny belongs to time. Time is now; and, it is soon to end for each of us personally either by Christ’s coming or at death.

#### MY COMMITMENT

Oh, kind Father, how thankful I am that Thou didst reveal so much of the future to the prophet Daniel! It has brought encouragement to Thy people down through the ages—that all will be well—for Christ is returning to take us home! And now, we are so close to the end of time! Help me each day to live for Thee all the more fully, so I can be ready when Jesus returns in power and glory! In His name, I ask it, Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—The glorious truth that Jesus is coming back soon! Oh, how we long for that day when we will be with Him forever!

A Complete Evangelistic Sermon: Chapter Eight

# The Second Coming of Christ

He is Coming Soon!

**A great prairie fire, driven by a strong wind, swept relentlessly toward a farmer's homestead.** The man quickly hitched his horses to the plow and made several furrows in the form of a large circle around his home. Then he set fire to the dry grass within the circle and totally burned it.

**The roaring, terrifying demons of the prairie, with giant tongues of leaping flames, charged down upon that home.** But when it struck the furrows and the ground already burned over, it swirled around both sides of the circle. For a brief time, there was thick smoke everywhere.

Then the air cleared; and the fire, now downwind, could be seen receding in the distance as it went on its way. The farmer and his family, his house and barns, his machinery and stock, had all been saved.

**The fire cannot come where the fire has already been! The fires of God's wrath against sin burned over Calvary.** All of us who are willing to gather about the cross, and there obediently give our lives to Jesus and henceforth serve Him, will be safe from the fires of final destruction.

## CHRIST IS SOON TO RETURN

We must prepare for what is ahead. **Christ is going to return for His faithful ones soon. It will be His Second Coming.** Only those who are trusting in Him at that time will be secure when this final crisis of the ages occurs.

**In 1860, the French scientist Pierre Berchelt spoke these words,** "Within a hundred years of physical and chemical science, man will know what the atom is. It is my belief that not long after science reaches that point, God will come down to earth with His big ring of keys and will say to humanity, **'Gentlemen, it is closing time.'**"

Pitirim Sorokin wrote in his *Crisis of Our Age*:

"The history of human progress is a history of incurable stupidity. In the course of human history, several thousand revolutions have been launched with a view to establishing paradise on earth. None of them has ever achieved its purpose."

**Today, we daily see more immense catastrophes,—and on a global scale that is greater than ever before. Everything about us—in international events, deepening calamities, and natural**

**disasters—proclaims in trumpet tones that the coming of Christ is near!**

"A little while, and He shall come, The hour draws on apace, The blessed hour, the glorious morn, When we shall see His face; How light our trials then will seem! How short our pilgrim way! Our life on earth, a fitful dream, Dispelled by dawning day!"

## THE FIRST ADVENT PREDICTED

**All through the Old Testament Scriptures, we find promises that Christ would come.** We find it in the very first prophecy, which is also the first promise in the Bible. When Adam and Eve, our first parents, sinned, God promised that one of their descendants would eventually come and destroy the power of Satan:

"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel."—*Genesis 3:15*.

"There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel."—*Numbers 24:17*.

**The entire 53rd chapter of Isaiah told about the coming Messiah.** The promise was that "Shiloh would come" (*Genesis 49:10*). He would be "the Prince of Peace" (*Isaiah 9:6*).

**He came the first time as a "Lamb"** (John 1:29). *Isaiah 53:7-8* predicts this:

"He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? for He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of My people was He stricken."—*Isaiah 53:7-8*.

**The purpose of this first coming was to offer pardon to the guilty sinner.**

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."—*Isaiah 55:7*.

We are told that this was made possible by Christ's life and death.

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."—*John 1:29*.

"She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins."—*Matthew 1:21*.

**But we are also told about another coming of Christ, which would complete the work of saving man from sin:**

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."—*Hebrews 9:28*.

**Did the Old Testament prophets also see be-**

### **yond the first coming of Christ—to the second?**

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”—*Acts 3:19-21*.

Here we are assured that *all* the prophets of old understood that there was to be a glorious coming of the Messiah which would restore God’s original plan for mankind.

**Dwight L. Moody estimated that the second coming of Christ is referred to 2,500 times in the Bible.** For every prophecy predicting the first coming of Christ, there are eight which promise His second advent.

The psalmist, David, wrote:

“Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.”—*Psalms 50:3-5*.

Jude, next to the last book of the New Testament, names one of the first Old Testament prophets who preached the Second Advent of Christ.

“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”—*Jude 14-15*.

Enoch was only the seventh generation from Adam. Living long before the Flood, Enoch, as quoted above, painted a word picture of Christ’s coming which fairly matches that which John wrote in the Revelation.

**The message of the Old Testament rings forth: “He is coming!” Coming in humility and suffering, then later coming in power and glory.** But always without a wavering note. *He is coming!*

### **A TRIUMPHANT MESSAGE**

**The first great message of the New Testament is that *He has come!***

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”—*Luke 2:11*.

He came as a babe born of a virgin, as a man clothed in the garb of a carpenter, as the Messiah baptized of John in the Jordan River, and anointed with the Holy Spirit. He came as the overcomer, tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. He

came as the master teacher, the divine healer, the great comforter. He died on Calvary for the sins of men. He rose from the tomb with the keys of hell and death snatched from the sealed and stony sepulchre, and ascended into heaven as the Son of man. All this *He has done*. Yes, He *has* come. That was the *first advent*.

**But there is more! The second wonderful message of the New Testament is, “He is coming again!”**

Here is what Jesus said, when questioned by His disciples:

“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”—*Matthew 24:30*.

On trial before the high priest a few hours before Calvary, **Jesus was put under oath to answer the question as to whether He was the Son of God.** Standing there, bound with ropes before the arrogant Caiaphas, Christ unhesitatingly declared:

“Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”—*Matthew 26:64*.

**These words affirmed in open testimony before the highest Jewish court in the land** that which He had privately said to His disciples only a few hours earlier:

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”—*John 14:1-3*.

Then, only 43 days later at Christ’s ascension, we find the testimony of the angels:

“Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.”—*Acts 1:11*.

**The Apostle Paul, ready for execution by Nero’s decree, exclaimed in triumph:**

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”—*2 Timothy 4:7-8*.

Did you know that Christian believers who lived back during those ancient persecutions said to one another, “*Maranatha!*” when passing on the streets of Rome. This meant “The Lord is coming!” **Down through the centuries, God’s faithful have waited, watched, and prayed for the coming of the Lord**

**Jesus Christ** in the clouds of heaven.

The Apostle Peter solemnly declared to the believers the importance of preparing their lives for that great event.

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?”—*2 Peter 3:10-12*.

**In Revelation, Christ also warns us to prepare for His coming:**

“Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as His work shall be.”—*Revelation 22:12*.

We earlier read the first promise in the Bible. Now we come to the last promise in the Bible;

“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly.”—*Revelation 22:20*.

**March 11, 1942, was a dark day for the freedom-loving peoples of the world.** General Douglas MacArthur was ordered by his superior to leave the Philippines. The overwhelming forces of the enemy were sweeping in. In that black and bitter night, as he prepared to step into a departing ship, he uttered the promise, “*I shall return!*”

MacArthur later fulfilled that promise, when on October 20, 1944, he stepped on shore, and his forces began the triumphant liberation of the Philippines.

The Captain of our salvation is soon to return also, for He has repeatedly declared, “*I will return!*”

#### **HOW WILL CHRIST RETURN?**

Yes, this is the question we want answered. **For it is only as we learn from Scripture how Christ will actually return for His faithful ones—that we can recognize the false christs which He predicted would try to deceive us.**

“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.”—*Matthew 24:4-5*.

**Here are four facts about the Second Advent of Christ which neither men nor devils can imitate:**

**First, Christ will return with ten thousand of thousands of shining angels!**

“The Son of man shall come in His glory, and all

the holy angels with Him.”—*Matthew 25:31*.

“They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”—*Matthew 24:30-31*.

**Second, the righteous dead will be resurrected.**

“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.”—*1 Thessalonians 4:16*.

**Third, the righteous living will be taken up.**

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”—*1 Thessalonians 4:17*.

**Fourth, the bodies of the righteous dead will be changed.**

“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and **this mortal must put on immortality.**”—*1 Corinthians 15:52-53*.

“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body **that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body,** according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”—*Philippians 3:20-21*.

“So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption.”—*1 Corinthians 15:42*.

Those of God’s faithful ones who died of wasting disease, or were killed in accidents, will come forth in eternal vigor and health.

“He will gather the wheat in His garner,

But the chaff will He scatter away;

Then how shall we stand in the judgment

Of the great resurrection day?”

The answer to those words is always the same. **We may wear the crown of everlasting life in that great day, if now we will surrender our lives to Christ and live clean, godly lives in obedience, by enabling faith in Christ, to His Written Word, the Bible.**

“Oft me thinks I hear His footsteps, Stealing down the paths of time, And the future dark with shadows, Brightens with this hope sublime; Sound the soul-inspiring anthem, Angel hosts, your harps attune; Earth’s long night is almost over, Christ is coming.”

#### **SIGNS THAT HIS COMING IS NEAR**

**We see all about us, on a massive scale, the wars and fear, the famines and disasters which the Bible predicted would occur in these last**

days.

"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places."—*Matthew 24:7. (Also see Luke 21:11, 25-26; Daniel 12:1; Joel 3:9-14; Revelation 11:18.)*

**We see false christs arising, false prophets, and deceivers of all kinds.**

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."—*Matthew 24:24 (also 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 4:3-4; Matthew 15:9).*

We see intense evil, as in Noah's day.

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually . . . The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence."—*Genesis 6:5, 11.*

**Oh, how few are preparing for that great event, when Christ shall return for His own!**

**A man visiting a certain school told the pupils that he would give a prize to the one whose desk he found in the best order when he returned.** "But when will you return?" some of them asked.

"That I cannot tell," was the answer.

One little girl, who had been noted for her disorderly habits, announced that she meant to win the prize. "You!" her classmates jeered. "Why, your desk is always out of order."

"Oh, but I mean to clean it the first of every week." "But suppose he should come at the end of the week?" Someone asked. "Then I will clean it every morning."

"But he may come at the end of the day." For a moment the little girl was silent. **"I know what I'll do," she said decidedly; "I'll just keep it clean."**

We cannot know the exact hour when Jesus will come; but, **trusting in Him for courage and strength to press on, we must make sure that we are ready when that great day comes!**

"Down the minster aisles of splendor, from betwixt the cherubim, Through the wondering throng, with motion strong and fleet, Sounds His victor tread approaching, with a music far and dim—the music of the coming of His feet.

"Sandaed not with sheen of silver, girded not with woven gold, Weighted not with shimmering gems and odors sweet, But white-winged and shod with glory in the Tabor light of old—The glory of the coming of His feet.

"He is coming, O my friend, with His everlasting peace, With His blessedness immortal and complete; He is coming, O my friend, and His coming brings release—I listen for the coming of His feet."

#### BIBLE SUMMARY

**Here is a brief summary of part of what we are learning in this chapter.** These are truths to be read over and over again, repeated to our children, and shared with others:

**Christ promises that He will return for us.**

"In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."—*John 14:2-3.*

**Jesus explained why many not be prepared for His coming.**

"But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of."—*Matthew 24:48-50.*

"And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."—*Luke 17:26-30.*

**Descriptions of those who are preparing for His Second Advent:**

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."—*1 John 3:2-3.*

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."—*2 Timothy 4:7-8.*

"And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."—*Isaiah 25:9.*

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works."—*Matthew 16:27.*

**His coming will be a time of judgment of the wicked.**

"For He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth."—*Psalms 96:13.*

"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all."—*Jude*

14-15.

“The Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom.”—2 *Timothy* 4:1.

“If Jesus should come at this moment To catch up with Him in the air, All those who love His appearing, Forever to be with Him there, How would He find you, I wonder—Watching, waiting, faithful, true? Dearly beloved, consider—How would it be with you?”

#### **MY COMMITMENT**

My kind Father in heaven, I want to rededicate my life anew to Thee. Please help me, day by day, to live as though each day were my last! I want to be with Thee in heaven. There is nothing more important to me in life. I thank Thee for what Christ has done and is doing to save my soul. In His name I ask it, Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—Why is there sin? Is there a devil, and where did He come from? Here are important facts everyone needs to know.

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— PART THREE —

**ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST**

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A Complete Evangelistic Sermon: Chapter Nine

# The Truth about Satan and Sin

**God Did Not Create Evil**

**When the great Italian artist, Leonardo da Vinci, was asked to paint a mural of Christ and His disciples at the Last Supper for the wall of the convent in Milan, he began work on the project in the year 1494.** He wanted to portray that moment, in John 13:21, when Jesus announces that one of His twelve disciples would betray Him.

As the painting (*L'Ultima Cena* is its Italian name) was nearing completion, **only the figures of Christ and Judas needed to be added.** But, so far, he had been unable to find a model for either one: a face sublime and godly for Christ, and one grim with sin-etched lines on it for Judas Iscariot.

**The months passed, and then one day entering a small church—he saw the young choir leader.** It was the man he wanted for the portrayal of Christ. His name was Pietro Bandinelli.

After many days seated before da Vinci, that part of the painting was completed. When it was finished, the young man gazed at it wistfully and said, “Oh, that I could be more like Him!” The artist replied, “You can be, if you will follow His example.”

**Months turned into years, and the painting remained unfinished.** That other face Leonardo searched for—fallen, bitter, cruel and depraved—could not be found.

Then four years later, on a cool, crisp evening in 1498, he met a beggar. Clothed in rags, the man had deep-set eyes which were clouded by remorse and sin.

**Greatly excited, Da Vinci hired him as a model and began painting Judas.** The tramp’s features were painted into the face of the betrayer.

**One day, as he was finishing on the face, the beggar began to weep. Then he confessed, “You see, I am Pietro, the one who sat for your Christ!”** He had been the young choir director which Leonardo had painted from only four years earlier.

## WHY IS OUR WORLD LIKE THIS?

**The age-old question of the skeptic has always been, “Why would God create an evil world like**

**this and let it continue?”**

**First, God did not create an evil world.** Inspiration tells us that, in the beginning —

“God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.”—*Genesis 1:31*.

God is love. His law is love. All His dealings with all His creatures, when properly understood, are a demonstration of unchanging love. God did not create an evil world.

**Second, it is the people down here that have made it evil.**

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”—*Romans 5:12*.

Sin begins one way and ends in a thousand ways. And all lead to one place, marked “death”!

**Third, God will not violate the free will of sinners who want to sin. But He has provided a solution for all willing to accept it.** He gave us His Son who died for our sins, and offers to save us if we will humbly confess and forsake our sins, and yield our lives to His control.

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

“For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.

“He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”—*John 3:14-18*.

## WHAT IS SIN?

**Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, a well-known liberal preacher of half a century ago, wrote:**

“Today we and our hopes and all our efforts after goodness are up against a powerful antagonism, something demonic, tragic, terrific in human nature, that turns our loveliest qualities to evil and our finest endeavors into failure. *Our fathers called it sin, but we no longer do.*”

Another writer said this:

“Man calls sin an accident; God calls it an abomination. Man calls it a chance; God calls it a choice. Man calls it an error; God calls it enmity. Man calls it fascination; God calls it fatality. Man calls sin a luxury; God calls it lawlessness. Man calls sin a trifle; God calls it a tragedy. Man calls sin a mistake; God calls it madness.”

**What is sin?** According to the Bible, sin has *only one* comprehensive definition.

**“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth**

**also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.**—1 John 3:4.

**That is what the Bible says. Sin is breaking God's moral law of Ten Commandments.** And so we see that it is disobedience to God's will that has brought all the sorrow and wretchedness into our world.

#### WHY DOES GOD NOT STOP THE SIN?

**Why does God not stop all this sin and misery right now?** He could have done so long ago, but then you and I would not have had a chance to be saved! **God decided that every person born into this world must have an opportunity to make a decision.** Each person would be given opportunity, through the enabling strength of God, to choose to live a clean, godly life, or instead resist the movings of the Holy Spirit speaking through his conscience,—and cling to his selfish, evil ways.

**How long will all this continue?** God has promised that, when the wickedness throughout the world reaches a certain point, He is going to step in and put an end to it. *Sin will not continue forever.* More about this in later chapters.

#### WHO GOT SIN STARTED?

**How did all this evil begin? Who got it started?** God, who made all things, did not create evil in the beginning. There was a time when there was no sin.

But there can be no sin without a sinner! It is not something that a person catches, like a disease. He becomes a sinner because of personal choices that he makes. Sin is connected with the seat of conscience—the will.

**Somebody, somewhere willed to sin. Evidence of this is everywhere. Who was it?** The answer is in the Bible:

“He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning.”—1 John 3:8.

**Here we have the name of the original—the first—sinner.** His name is “the devil.” In Revelation 12:9, he is there described as “the great dragon . . . that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan.” Isaiah refers to him as “Lucifer, son of the morning” (*Isaiah 14:12*). We are told that he first sinned “in the beginning.”

Lucifer was a created being. Ezekiel, presenting Satan under the symbol of the king of Tyrus, says of him, “the day that thou wast created” (*Ezekiel 28:13*).

It is well to recall here that God “created all things by Jesus Christ” (*Ephesians 3:9*). This includes all things in heaven as well as on earth.

“For by Him were all things created, that are in

heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him.”—*Colossians 1:16*.

The next verse says that Christ existed “before all things” (*verse 17*). Thus Christ, working with the Father, created Lucifer.

#### LUCIFER DECIDES TO SIN

“Why did God make the devil?” is a question often asked. The answer is that God made everything; so He made the being who, by his own choice, became a devil.

**Like every other one of God's creatures, Lucifer was originally a perfect being,** kind and loving, in full harmony with the principles of heaven.

“Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God . . . Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God.”—*Ezekiel 28:12-14*.

It seems certain that Lucifer was the wisest of all the angelic host. He was not only “full of wisdom,” he was “perfect in beauty.” In addition, he was also “the anointed cherub.” This means he stood very close to the throne of God.

In the Old Testament sanctuary, which was patterned after the heavenly sanctuary (*Hebrews 8:5*), we read, “And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings” (*Exodus 25:20*). Because their wings were arched above the mercy seat—which represented the throne of God,—they stood in the immediate presence of God. Prior to his fall, Lucifer had been one of those anointed cherubs.

**How did Lucifer begin to be sinful? He transgressed God's law.** We have already learned that this is the definition of sin:

“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: **for sin is the transgression of the law.**”—1 John 3:4.

**God's holy law tells what He is like. Sin is not living in accordance with the character of God.**

**Any transgression against the law of God is sin;** and sin always brings dissension, confusion, and sadness to many. Breaking God's law is disloyalty, and an act of treason against Him.

Before Lucifer sinned, wickedness had never existed. God's loving ways had never before been called into question. **By disobeying God's law, Lucifer actually rebelled against God's government**—for His law governs the universe and is the foundation of His throne.

Everyone that violates it brings misery to themselves. Soon they are trying to make life miserable for those around them.

When Lucifer decided to rebel against God and His government, he could only use deception to win many others to his side. Gradually, he began to talk other angels into joining him in imagining that God was unjust.

#### **WHY GOD PERMITTED SIN TO BEGIN**

##### **Why did the Lord let Lucifer sin?**

There are only two ways in which God could have created the higher orders of His creatures. He could make them with the power of choice or without that power.

**If He had made them without the power of making decisions on their own, the power of choice, they would have been mere machines, automatons.** As a train follows along the track, they would have automatically done whatever they were told. Their obedience would be mechanical, slavish. But God made us all—both angels and men—to be free, moral agents. That could only be done by giving us the power of choice, the power to obey or disobey.

Worship, prayer, praise, obedience—and most everything else that makes our higher levels of intelligent thinking and acting possible—come from the fact that **God has given us this power so we can decide for ourselves, the power of the will, the power of choice.** We can think and choose. We can decide whether we will serve God or our own selfish interests.

**Because God made all of us this way, those who choose to serve God—do so because they love Him and know His laws are just, and ought to be obeyed.**

Because we are creatures with the power of choice, **genuine Bible religion is based on persuasion and decision-making, not on force.** Only Satan tries to force people to do something.

**Willpower, the kingly power of reason is the key.** Do you and I want to be on God's side in the worldwide struggle of good against evil? This is the decision placed before all men.

"If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."—*Joshua 24:15*.

**If we will choose God's side,—He will give us enabling strength to resist temptation and obey His law.**

**Each person shall decide for himself whether he wants to be saved or lost; and those who are redeemed will, through the grace of Christ, have carried that decision to success.**

"Let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that

is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."—*Revelation 22:17*.

**Was the entrance of sin inevitable?** No, but the power of choice makes possible the choosing of either good or evil. **The angels in heaven had the power to choose evil, the same power we have down here.**

Because of this, the rise of sin and rebellion was always a possibility lurking in the background. Unfortunately, one day, evil thoughts began in Lucifer's mind.

"Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."—*Ezekiel 28:15*.

Solomon truly said, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (*Proverbs 16:18*). **Strangely, in the loving, unselfish atmosphere of heaven, Lucifer began thinking he should be first. He became proud.**

"Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness."—*Ezekiel 28:17*.

Lucifer decided that he was so great,—that he should be considered a god.

"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit."—*Isaiah 14:13-15*.

**Because God did not recognize the imagination of this proud angel as correct, Lucifer became jealous, and began falsely complaining to the other angels that he was being mistreated.**

Both God and Christ, and the good angels, tried to reason with Lucifer, and also with the angels who began allying with him. But these rebels were determined to gain new rights. **Lucifer said that God's law was unjust and that everyone could make better decisions by not obeying it.**

**Why did God not instantly destroy Lucifer as soon as he began sinning?** If God had done this, everyone would thereafter have served God from fear, rather than love. The loving Creator had to let each make his own decision. God never uses compulsion to keep anyone by His side.

Lucifer had said, "I will exalt my throne. I will have a government of my own. I will rebel against God." But in doing this, he ignored the great truth that "whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased" (*Luke 14:11*). He began filling his mind with hatred against God's leadership and government.

Later, when Christ came to earth, He said that Satan was the originator of all lies and murders, be-

cause “whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer” (1 John 3:15). Christ told some evil men:

“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”—John 8:44.

**Cloaking himself under a guise of great interest for the well-being of the angels, Lucifer told one lie after another**, until he had won many angels to his side. Satan could do what God could not do; he could say that which was not true, and use evil methods, deceptive practices, and lying words.

**So it was that Lucifer “the light bearer” became Satan “the adversary.”**

**When every angel in heaven had taken a definite stand either for or against God and His government,—the time had come for Satan and his followers to be cast out of heaven.**

“There was war in heaven: Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found anymore in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”—Revelation 12:7-9.

The Bible tells us that “Michael” is Christ (*Jude 9*; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; John 4:25-29).

#### SATAN ENTERS THE GARDEN

**Arriving down here, about the time of the Creation of our world, Satan decided to tempt our first parents (Genesis 1-3).**

Life is full of tests. We need them in order to show on whose side we stand. Adam and Eve had one also. **God specified that they were not to eat the fruit of just one of the multitude of fruit trees in the Garden of Eden. That was the lightest test which could possibly be given**—whether or not they would eat some fruit.

By this simple device man’s faith, love, loyalty, and obedience were to be tested. If they disobeyed God’s command, they would show that they distrusted His love, disbelieved His Word, and disobeyed His laws. It was as simple as that. **No sin is ever small! The very lightness of the prohibition would make the sin great.** It could not be said to have resulted from their inability to do something, for no action was required. Just don’t eat that one fruit.

**And, God added: If you do eat of it, you will die.** Why? Because by so doing they would agree with Satan that it was all right to disobey what God said! They would have joined Satan’s side.

“And the Lord God took the man, and put him

into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”—Genesis 2:15-17.

But Adam and Eve failed the simple test. Satan took the form of a snake and was waiting at the forbidden tree. **When Eve dared to walk over close to that tree, Satan was ready with deceptive words.** Here is what happened:

“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

“And the serpent said unto the woman, **Ye shall not surely die.** For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”—Genesis 3:1-6.

**Notice that Satan told Eve four specific lies: (1) God is not telling you the truth. (2) You will not die if you eat it. Instead, (3) you yourself will become god, (4) and be filled with far greater wisdom.**

**Adam and Eve gained nothing by committing that sin. Instead, their minds became confused and filled with worry.** Sin always separates us from God, and that is what had happened to them.

“Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you.”—Isaiah 59:1-2.

**When God came to see them that evening, for the first time in their lives—they were filled with fear.** When He asked them what had happened, they began blaming one another and the snake. **They were really blaming God and trying to make excuses** why their sin was not so bad, for it was not their fault.

#### THE PROMISE OF A REDEEMER

**God had earlier said that the day they ate of the forbidden tree, they would be doomed to finally die an eternal death. But, in the first promise recorded in the Bible, He now told them that a Redeemer would come later through**

**whom they might be saved!** It was because of the promised Redeemer that they did not die that day. Instead, Speaking to Satan, God said:

“I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and Thou shalt bruise His heel.”—*Genesis 3:15*.

**What a glorious promise! If we will repent; surrender our lives to God’s control; and, through the enabling grace of Christ be obedient to Him,—eventually heaven will be ours,** there to live with Christ and holy angels throughout eternity!

**As a result of their sin, Adam and Eve had to leave the garden;** so they would not continue eating of the Tree of Life, which could keep them from ultimately dying (*Genesis 3:22-24*). Later, their first son killed his younger brother! (*Genesis 4:1, 8*). How quickly one little sin began leading to many more terrible ones!

#### **SATAN CLAIMS DOMINION OVER THE WORLD**

**Because our first parents and their descendants sinned, Satan was able to try to gain control of our planet.** Mankind had, by their sinning, chosen the devil as their leader.

“While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.”—*2 Peter 2:19*.

When God created our world, He gave the dominion—the control of it—to our first parents (*Genesis 1:28*). **But Satan usurped that dominion.**

“The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”—*2 Corinthians 4:4*.

Satan claimed this dominion to be his, when he tempted Christ:

“The devil said unto Him, All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If Thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be Thine.”—*Luke 4:6-7*.

When the devil tempts you and me,—he uses the same kind of lying reasoning!

**Christ, by His life of obedience and His death on the cross, recovered the lost dominion.** He made possible the restoration of man and all that man had lost.

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”—*Luke 19:10*.

#### **HOW SATAN WORKS**

**There was no reason for sin. To give a reason would be to justify the deed. To offer an excuse**

**would be inexcusable.** At first in heaven, Lucifer had everything that God could give him, except being part of the Godhead. But he believed his own lies which he imagined out of nothing. Later, down here on earth, man, who had every possible blessing, also chose to believe the devil’s lies.

**Jesus called Satan “the prince of this world”** (*John 12:31; 14:30*). Paul said he was “the prince of the power of the air” (*Ephesians 2:2*). The Pharisees called Him “the prince of devils” (*Matthew 12:24*).

**Satan is the “accuser of our brethren”** (*Revelation 12:10*); “your adversary” (*1 Peter 5:8*); and “the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (*Ephesians 2:2*).

**In the Bible, the work of Satan is compared with a hunter setting out snares** (*Psalms 91:3*), to a wolf ravaging the flock (*John 10:12*), and to a lion seeking to catch and devour his prey (*1 Peter 5:8*).

**Satan has special methods of getting people to follow him to destruction.** The following true story illustrates one way this is done:

**Over a hundred years ago,** a preacher named Rowland Hill was walking on a country street when **he saw a drove of pigs following a man.** Intrigued, he followed the procession—and found that the man led the pigs to the slaughterhouse! Astonished, Hill asked the man how this was done, and was told this: “Oh, you did not notice. I was carrying a sack of beans, and I dropped a few as I went along—and the pigs kept following me. It works every time.”

*There is a parallel story, which not only contrasts the methods of Christ and Satan, but also reveals another method of Satan:*

**There was a party of tourists in Palestine.** The guide who was with them was explaining the interesting customs of the Near East. He said, “In the West, the shepherd and his dog drive the sheep, but over here the opposite occurs. The shepherd always leads his sheep, going on before them. They know his voice and they follow him, as we read in Scripture: “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me” (*John 10:27*).

**Just then, they saw a man driving a flock of sheep down the road.** Startled, the guide asked him what he was doing. The reply was, “You are right, shepherds over here lead their sheep. **But I am not a shepherd. I am the butcher,** and I am driving them to market.”

**Satan has two methods. He keeps offering little trinkets and apparent pleasures to keep people in his ranks. He then affects their minds and tries to drive them relentlessly into resentments, depression, violence, and worse.**

But regardless whether he has been captured by beans or a storm of sinful emotions, a person can, if he chooses to do so, immediately flee to God in prayer—and Satan will be forced to flee.

#### **FIVE FACTS ABOUT SIN**

**Here are five crucial facts about sin:**

**First, as mentioned earlier, it is the transgression of God's law.**

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."—*1 John 3:4*.

**The second fact is that, unless repented of and forsaken, it always leads to an eternal death.**

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."—*Romans 6:23*.

"Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."—*James 1:14-15*.

**The third fact is that Christ died to help us stop sinning.**

"He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin."—*1 John 3:5-9*.

**The fourth fact is that, in mercy, God keeps giving us time to repent and return to Him.** — And to those willing to come, God gives them the strength to do so!

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."—*2 Peter 3:9*.

"For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye."—*Ezekiel 18:32*.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."—*Revelation 22:17*.

**The fifth fact is that God is going to step in before long—and put a stop to sin and unrepentant sinners. Sin will never arise again after that.**

We dare not wait! It is now that we must make our decision to remain God's faithful, obedient children to the end!

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are

therein shall be burned up.

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless."—*2 Peter 3:10-14*.

"What do ye imagine against the Lord? He will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time."—*Nahum 1:9*.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be anymore pain: for the former things are passed away."—*Revelation 21:4*.

#### **IT IS TIME TO MAKE YOUR OWN DECISION**

**Keep in mind that it was impossible for Eve in Eden to believe what the devil said—without first doubting the words of God.**

"In the Judgment, men will not be condemned because they conscientiously believed a lie, but because they did not believe the truth, because they neglected the opportunity of learning what is truth."

—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 55*

**Our safety lies in loving and obeying the truths of God's Word, and remaining loyal to God.**

"The working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."—*2 Thessalonians 2:9-10*.

**Eve distrusted God's love, doubted His Word, and transgressed His law.** She disobeyed His express words. She sinned.

"O could we know the love that bendeth o'er us, O could we understand the Father's heart, Hear how the angels chant their loving chorus.

"But when down our cheeks the bitter teardrops start, See how all Heaven is moved to consolation, And all the mysteries of Calvary mark.

"We should not doubt the coming of salvation, Not think all hope is lost when it is dark."

—*Fanny Bolton*

**To His faithful children in every age, Jesus says, "in the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).** It was Richard Baxter who said, "The way may seem strange to me, but not to Christ."

"Then trust in God through all thy days; Fear not, for He doth hold thy hand; Though dark thy way, still sing and praise, Sometime, sometime, we'll understand."

**Man is not foredoomed to evil or predestined to good.** There are two ways, two principles, two powers. There is the upward way, and there is the downward way. There is the good principle, and there is the evil principle. There is the power of Christ, and there is the power of Satan.

"Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide, In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side."

—James Russell Lowell

**Which way shall we take? Which principle shall reign within us? Who shall be our master, Christ or Satan?** The choice is ours. A delicate balance scale, that will determine our destiny, has been entrusted to each one of us. God will not tip it. Christ will not force it. Angels may not touch it. Satan cannot move it. **Only man, by casting in the weight of his own personal choice,** may decide which way the horizontal beam on the scale moves—down or up,—and what power shall be dominant in his life.

Back in the time of Rome, there were great open-air theaters that even today remain scattered over the Greco-Roman world.

**This earth is a mighty stage and a great drama is going on. The controversy between good and evil is being played to its very end—as every person in the world chooses whom he will serve.** On this gigantic stage, the principles of both the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan are being worked out, side by side.

We are nearing the end. When it comes, the whole universe will see that love is stronger than sin and that God has been good and just in all that He did and still does. When the curtain falls on evil down here, there will be no more sin or sorrow, nothing wrong with the universe, only eternal harmony and happiness.

**William E. Henley concluded his atheist work, *Invictus*, with these words:** "I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul." Although strangely proud of the fact that he was going to die separated from God and eternal life, yet that sentence by Henley is true. **Each of us does decide the master we will serve!** It is within our power to determine whether we will accept Christ or live in captivity to the devil and die in the misery of our sins.

#### HOW TO OVERCOME THE DEVIL

**There are three things which, in the strength of Christ, we can do to overcome Satan:**

**First, we can individually go to Calvary and,**

**kneeling there, cry to God every day for help.** "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb" (*Revelation 12:11*). Although Satan sought to make Golgotha the final hour of defeat, Jesus made it the glorious, triumphant hour of victory.

"That through death, He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."—*Hebrews 2:14*.

Begin your journey to heaven at the cross of Calvary. Keep close to Christ all along the pathway of enabled obedience—all the way to heaven.

**The second thing we can do to resist Satan is to use the powerful "sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God"** (*Ephesians 6:17*).

Christ overcame Satan in the wilderness of temptation through "It is written." Three times that day Christ used the Bible to withstand the devil's attacks (*Matthew 4:1-10*).

**The third thing is to "resist the devil and he will flee from you"** (*James 4:7*). Down through the ages, the faithful "overcome him . . . by the word of their testimony" (*Revelation 12:11*).

We must "contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (*Jude 3*). We must speak up and bear our testimony for God, for Christ, and for the truths of His Word. We must stand up and be counted for God; and, taking the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit,—go forth to "fight the good fight of faith," thus laying "hold on eternal life" (*1 Timothy 6:12*).

**A young man attending college was noted for his Christian character.** One morning the president of the college called him to his office for a personal interview. Questioning the youth about his spiritual experience, his heart was warmed with the young man's answers. **"I would give all I have in this world to have what you possess,"** said the president.

**"Then you may have it, sir,"** was the student's reply. **"That is exactly what it takes.** That is what it cost me."

#### MY COMMITMENT

Heavenly Father, how much we need Thee every hour and every day! Satan and his demons want to destroy us! Please, kindly Father, keep me close by Thy side! Warn me by Thy Holy Spirit when I begin to wander away. By the enabling grace of Jesus, my Lord and Saviour, I determine to study Thy Inspired Writings every day and keep praying earnestly for help and guidance; all the while trying to help those around me to also flee to Thee for protection from the devil's power. In Jesus' name I ask it, Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—The Bible truth about what

happens when a man dies. This is a very important subject which you will want to understand.

# Eternal Life Only through Christ

*What the Bible Says about Death*

**"I'll give a million dollars for each year you can add to my life," a wealthy American said to his medical advisers when he was eighty years old.**

"Millions of money for an inch of time!" cried Queen Elizabeth I, the queen of England in 1603, upon her dying bed. Unhappy woman, reclining upon a couch, with ten thousand dresses in her wardrobe, a kingdom on which the sun never sets, at her feet—all now valueless. She had lived 70 years and ruled 45 years, yet never had time to come to Christ.

**In contrast, Queen Victoria on her deathbed, called for her beloved hymn to be sung:** "Rock of Ages, cleft for me. Let me hide myself in Thee." "It is enough," she said, "I am still with Him and will see Him at the resurrection!" She had lived 82 years and ruled 63 years, yet amid all her activities, she made Christ her personal Saviour.

The two most important queens in British history—yet how differently did each of their lives end!

**Some time ago, a businessman was seated at his dinner table reading aloud a letter** he had just received from a friend. "And so his illness grew suddenly worse until the doctors admitted that they could do nothing for him. A few weeks later he died. Then—

**"Daddy, what does 'die' mean?"** asked his little girl, looking up from her plate. Everyone said nothing. They could think of nothing to say. Yet few subjects are more clearly explained in the Bible.

**The ancient Christians of Rome, so heavily persecuted for their faith,** would gather about their loved ones in the Catacombs as they were dying, and sing, "Good night, beloved, sleep and take your rest. Lay down your head upon the Saviour's breast."

**When death comes, some are ready, and some are not.** This chapter will give you information you need to know. It will help you get ready.

## WHAT IS MORTAL AND IMMORTAL?

**Men wish they could live forever, but they are mortal. The word means "subject to death, destined to die."** In contrast, the word, "immortal," means "not mortal; exempt from liability to die; imperishable; everlasting" (*Webster's New International Dictionary*).

**Did God plan that sinless man, created in the image of God, should die? All will agree that He did not. God made man to live.**

But our Creator did not purpose that man should live if he sinned. This is how it was explained to Adam:

"Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof **thou shalt surely die.**"—*Genesis 2:17*.

The Hebrew original reads "dying thou shalt die." This means **the day you eat it you will begin to die; and, after a time, you will be entirely dead.** The sentence of death would be pronounced the day that man sinned, and the process of dying would immediately begin.

**Denying this definite statement of God's, Satan told Eve, "Ye shall not surely die"** (*Genesis 3:4*). But Christ said the devil was a liar (*John 8:44*).

**Eve believed the words of Satan because they seemed more pleasant than the words of God.** Men and women are still doing that.

The evening of the day that our first parents chose to sin, God told them, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (*Genesis 3:19*).

However, there was another tree in the garden, the fruit of which would extend life, if one continued to eat of it. This was the Tree of Life. But Adam and Eve were told that they would have to leave the Garden of Eden, for they could no longer be permitted to eat of the life-sustaining tree.

## WHO HAS IMMORTALITY?

Mark this in your mind: **The Bible teaches that God did not intend that sinners should live forever.** Even though it may be taught from a thousand pulpits, and printed in an equal number of books, the Bible says sinners will not live forever.

So, from what we have learned already, man was created with the *possibility* of immortality, on condition that he meet the test of obedience. **But he was not created with inherent immortality.** He was "subject to death" if he sinned, and was therefore "mortal." **There are no immortal sinners** and never will be, regardless of what anyone tells you.

About man, the Bible says, "Shall mortal man be more just than God?" (*Job 4:17*).

About God, the good Book says, "Who only hath immortality" (*1 Timothy 6:16*).

In other words, God is immortal and man is mortal. In fact, the word "immortal" is found but once in the Bible and is applied to God:

"Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory forever and ever."—*1 Timothy 1:17*.

**Man does not have innate (inherent) im-**

**mortality.** The theory of the natural immortality of the soul originated in paganism, and was adopted into the Christian church by the apostate church in the Dark Ages. Martin Luther said it was one of the “monstrous fables that form part of the Roman dunghill of decretals” (*quoted in E. Petavel, The Problem of Immortality, p. 255*). Commenting on the words of Solomon in Ecclesiastes 9:5-6, that the dead know not anything, the Reformer wrote:

“[This is] another place proving that the dead have no . . . feeling. There is, saith he, no duty, no science, no knowledge, no wisdom there. Solomon judgeth that the dead are asleep, and feel nothing at all. For the dead lie there, accounting neither days nor years, but when they are awaked, they shall seem to have slept scarce one minute.”—*Martin Luther, Exposition of Solomon's Book Called Ecclesiastes, p. 152.*

*There is a profound lesson in the following story:*

**One evening, King Charles II stopped in at a meeting of the Royal Society of England,** which was attended by the leading scientists of the nation.

The king said something like this: “Suppose I take a pail of water and it tips the beam of the scale at 10 pounds. Then I drop into the water 5 pounds of live fish. Why is it that, instead of now being 15 pounds, the scale still stands at 10 pounds?”

Various wise men arose and, in profound and complex words, suggested that air-filled fish sacs, theoretical vacuum, or nongravitating gravity might be the cause.

Then the king spoke. “You are all wrong, because when you add 5 pounds of fish to 10 pounds of water, you get a total weight of 15 pounds,—*as you learned gentlemen should all well know.*”

These men had been misled by trusting too much to a prominent man. Men and women today are still doing that.

**Let us turn to the Bible, which will always lead us aright. Here are four facts it presents us with:**

*Man only is mortal.*

“Shall mortal man be more just than God?”—*Job 4:17.*

*God is immortal.*

“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible.”—*1 Timothy 1:17.*

*Only God has immortality.*

“Who only hath immortality.”—*1 Timothy 6:16.*

*Man must seek for immortality.*

“To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.”—*Romans 2:7.*

**WHO ONLY WILL RECEIVE IMMORTALITY?**

**The possibility of receiving immortality is only possible through the gospel; that is, through Christ.**

“Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”—*2 Timothy 1:10.*

**It will not be given until the Second Advent, and only to God's faithful followers.**

“Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”—*1 Corinthians 15:51-55.*

In view of these Bible facts, it is strange that some still imagine that man has something immortal about him which not even God can destroy. This is stranger than the king's scientists who were talked into believing that  $10 + 5 = 10$ .

**SOUL NOT SEPARATE FROM THE BODY**

**Man does not have a separate “living soul.”**

However, someone will say, “But man is a living soul, and therefore cannot die.” Well, *what does the Bible say about this?* Here is the record:

“The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man **became** a living soul.”—*Genesis 2:7.*

**First,** God made Adam's body from the dust of the ground. Any scientist will tell you that we consist of minerals to be found in the ground and in the air.

**Second,** God breathed into Adam's nostrils *the breath of life*. **Here is no indication of any “immortal soul” being put into Adam.** No such “spirit Adam” ever existed. None was here created. God simply breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

**As a result,** “man *became* a living soul.”

**Body + breath of life = a living soul!** Note carefully: God did not breathe into Adam a living soul, but only the breath of life. **As a result, the man *became* a living soul.**

By itself an electric light bulb gives no light. But, when electricity is sent into its inner wiring, light is produced.

**Adam's body, lying on the ground was useless, until God switched on the current of life—and Adam became a living, active, functioning living soul.**

**Only while the switch is on does man have life and a soul.**

## SOUL AND SPIRIT

**The Hebrew and Greek words** from which we translate our English words, *soul* and *spirit*, are found about 1,700 times in the Bible. Actually, the word *soul* as used in the Bible does not always have exactly the same meaning. The same holds true of the word *spirit*.

**But in not one of the 1,700 places is either soul or spirit said to be immortal, never dying, imperishable, indestructible, everlasting, eternal, or having immortality.**

**Nor are the dead said to have a conscious existence apart from the body.**

Did you know that, in the Bible, animals also have “the breath of life” (*Genesis 7:15*)? This is because they are also living beings. In *Genesis 7:22*, margin, they are said to have “the breath of the spirit of life.”

(Actually, the words, “breath” and “spirit,” which come from the same Hebrew word, are interchangeable in many passages. For example, *James 2:26* has “the body without the spirit is dead.” In the margin, we find “breath” instead: “The body without the breath is dead.” It is the breath which keeps the body alive. In *Job 27:3*, we read “All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils.” The margin says it may be translated “breath.”)

Just like us, an animal may have a perfect body, but it may be perfectly dead. *It also must have the current of life switched on, in order to be alive.*

We are told that animals also have life (*Genesis 1:30*). The margin of that passage reads “a living soul” instead of “life.”

### WE NEED ETERNAL LIFE!

**When God breathed life into Adam, He was putting life into the masterpiece of earthly creation.** Our bodies and minds are amazing! The psalmist said:

“I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Thy works.”—*Psalms 139:14*.

Indeed, we are even told that we are not far below the angels!

“What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.”—*Psalms 8:4-5*.

Yet man is nothing without life. What he needs is eternal life!

**We can only have life—life that lasts forever—through a connection with Jesus Christ!** Here is what the Bible teaches about this:

“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the

witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son.

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”—*1 John 5:10-12*.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”—*John 3:16*.

Only Jesus “hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (*2 Timothy 1:10*).

We can conclude that **man does not by nature possess an immortal soul**. It takes the body and the spirit (or breath) of life together to make a living soul. Christ came to save all there is of man. For this to be done we must let Him sanctify all there is of us.

In order to possess immortality, man must acquire it; and, since immortality is an attribute of God, it can be obtained by man only as a gift from the One who possesses it. This is why Paul declared that the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

“Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.”—*Romans 2:6-7*.

**It is the way of the cross which leads to immortality.** Christ gave us the promise:

“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”—*Revelation 2:10*.

He also said:

“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.”—*Matthew 16:25*.

That is a sentence worth thinking about a long time. **Christ is telling us, “You cannot have life, unless you come to Me.”** “Please come,” He says, “I am waiting!” Submission and willing obedience to God’s will is the only road to holiness, heaven, and immortality.

**A person who weighs 140 pounds** contains enough fat for seven cakes of soap, carbon for 9,000 lead pencils, phosphorus for 2,000 match heads, magnesium for one dose of Epsom salts, iron enough to make one medium-sized nail, sufficient lime to whitewash a chicken coop, enough sulphur to rid one dog of fleas, and water enough to fill a ten-gallon can.

—Yet if that person accepts Christ as his Saviour, and lives all his days in cheerful obedience to his Lord and Master—he can inherit eternal life!

## THE JOURNEY TO DEATH

**What happens when a man dies?** We want to find out. Only the Bible can tell us the truth of the matter.

**Dr. Alexander Bogomoletz** was a Russian scientist who believed he could devise a serum which would retard the aging of the body's connective tissues. This scientist was determined to extend human life to 150 years.

He called his chemical solution ACS, or "*anti-reticular cytotoxic serum*." But the doctor died at the age of 64, or 86 years short of the mark. His heart gave out when he took his own serum.

—However, whether a man lives to be 70 or 170, he is still short of what God originally planned for him: *a life that measures with the life of God, a life that continues on forever!*

And this is still in God's plan! But it is only for those who accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and humbly, obediently, live their lives as truehearted followers of the Lamb of God.

Yet, because of sin, "it is appointed unto men once to die" (*Hebrews 9:27*). That death is the death we all experience. Most men will die twice; Christians, but once.

**The unsaved of earth will die twice.** The first death, which is the common lot of all men, is temporary. **The second death, which will be experienced only by the wicked, will be eternal.** The gospel of Christ does not save men from the first death; but it promises emphatically that the righteous "shall not be hurt of the second death," for over them it shall have "no power." See *Revelation 2:11; 20:6*. More on that second death in the next chapter.

According to a 2008 U.S. Census Bureau Report, 55.5 million people die every year; 6,300 die every month; and 105 every minute.

"There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death."—*Ecclesiastes 8:8*.

### **One man has described the journey of life:**

"Ten thousand human beings set forth together on their journey. After ten years, at least a third have disappeared. At the midpoint of the usual measure of life, but half are still on the road.

"Faster and faster the ranks grow thinner. Nearly all that remained until now grow weary and lie down to rise no more.

"At ninety these have been reduced to a handful of trembling patriarchs . . . One lingers, perhaps, a lonely marvel till the century is over. We look again and the work of death is finished." —*Burgess*

"One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet . . . Another dieth in the bitterness of

his soul" (*Job 21:23-25*). Death's sharpest impact comes to those with plenty, yet who are unprepared.

"How shocking must thy summons be, O Death, To him that is at ease in his possessions; Who counting on long years of pleasure here, Is quite unfurnished for that world to come!"

—Robert Blair, "*The Grave*"

### **WHAT HAPPENS AT DEATH?**

In the beginning—

"The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."—*Genesis 2:7*.

When man was created, his body was **first formed of dust. Then God breathed** the breath of life into him and man *became* "a living soul." It is the combination of the two (dust and the breath of life) that makes man a "living soul." **He does not have a soul that is separate from his body!** Only while the breath of life is in him, does man have life and a living soul.

When the breath of life is removed at his death, he ceases to be a living soul. He ceases to be alive. Man does not have a separate "spirit," nor does he have immortality.

*While he is alive:*

**Body + breath of life = a living soul**

*When a man dies:*

**Body – (minus) breath of life = a dead body**

God did not breathe into Adam a living soul, but only the breath of life. As a result, the man *became* a living soul. At death, the breath of life departed; and there was nothing left but a dead person, who is then buried.

So we see that, **at death, the opposite of the creative process occurs.** First "his breath goes forth" (*Psalms 146:4*). This is because, as Job explained, "The breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (*Job 33:4*). And again, "The spirit of God is in my nostrils" (*Job 27:3*). This is the "spirit of life" which God gives to all men; which, at death, is removed from him. "The spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (*Ecclesiastes 12:7*).

"His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."—*Psalms 146:4*.

(The Hebrew word for "breath" and "spirit" is the same.)

**Here is the complete equation in the Bible:**

*When man is given life, and while he has it:*

"The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."—*Genesis 2:7*.

**Body + breath of life = a living soul**

*When a man dies, and no longer has life:*

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it

was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”—*Ecclesiastes 12:7*.

**Body – (minus) breath of life = a dead body**

**Here is an illustration which will help explain this:**

A boy takes six wooden boards, and nails them together. The result is a box.

**Boards + nails = box**

Then he removes the nails from the wood, and there is no more box.

**Boards – (minus) nails = no box**

The box came from the combination of the boards and the nails. **When separated, there is no more box. It did not go anywhere; it just ceased to be a box.**

Now for a second illustration:

**Here is a candle. It stands ready to give light,** but it has no light of its own. We strike a match and light the wick. Then we have a lighted candle. Blow on the flame of the candle and it goes out. Where did it go? Out—that is all. And with the passing of the flame, the light also goes out.

Man is like that candle. **It takes divine energy to light him—to impart life to him. God strikes the match and man is a living soul.** Intelligence shines out of that human being. But **when the life is snuffed out of that man, the light goes out. The living soul dies.** Intelligence can no more be a part of that dead man than can the extinguished flame be a part of the candle. Like the flame, the soul, or life, has gone out. The human organization disintegrates in death.

Death is an enemy. It robs us of life. But death will not reign in this old world forever. Someday its power will be broken, and it too will be destroyed, never again to haunt the footsteps of a people redeemed from the grave and living with Christ forever.

*In God's blessed tomorrow we shall be reunited with loved ones “whom we have loved . . . and lost awhile.”* We are looking forward to that!

#### **WHERE DOES A MAN GO AT DEATH?**

**At death, a man goes to the grave and remains there.**

“What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?”—*Psalm 89:48*.

“For I know that Thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.”—*Job 30:23*.

“All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.”—*Ecclesiastes 3:20*.

#### **HOW MUCH DOES HE KNOW AFTER DEATH?**

**A lawyer once told a judge that he had eight reasons why his client was not present in court.**

Then, starting to enumerate them all, he said the first was that his client was dead. Immediately, the judge interrupted him and said he did not need to mention the others, as his first reason was sufficient.

**At death, a man's thoughts cease.**

“Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.”—*Psalm 146:3-4*.

**“For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing.”**—*Ecclesiastes 9:5*.

**“For in death there is no remembrance of Thee.”**—*Psalm 6:5*.

“His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.”—*Job 14:21*.

“If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness.”—*Job 17:13*.

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”—*Ecclesiastes 9:10*.

What of the feelings and emotions? Do they also cease at death? **—All a person's thought processes end at death!**

“Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished.”—*Ecclesiastes 9:6*.

The Scripture is plain. **When death comes, all thinking and feeling end.** —If they do not, then the Bible is false and unreliable. **Thinking and feeling did not exist before God breathed life into man, and they stop entirely when the man dies.** When the electric current is turned off, the bulb is there, but the light is gone.

**There is no probationary opportunity to accept Christ after the grave,** for all thought and action has ceased. **If we are to be saved, it must be done during these present probationary hours.** None of us can know how soon we might have an accident and sudden death.

#### **WHERE THE ERROR CAME FROM**

**Who started the theory of natural immortality?**

Who started this peculiar error that man has an immortal soul and lives forever? **It began in ancient Egypt, and spread throughout the world.** The Egyptians believed that man lives forever after death. The Hindus in India added to that yet another error—that man has lived forever *both before and after* he lives here on earth. That is the theory of reincarnation.

**But the belief in natural or innate immortality actually started with Satan** in the Garden of Eden.

**God had said, “Thou shalt surely die”** (*Genesis 2:17*). **The devil said, “Ye shall not surely die”** (*Genesis 3:4*).

Countless millions live in fear and religious tyranny because of the devil’s lie that there is continuing life—and even endless suffering—after death. (More on this in the next chapter.)

But the Bible teaches that, after man sinned, God removed him from the tree of life, lest he live forever (*Genesis 3:22-23*). God did not purpose to have everlasting sinners.

#### WHAT IS DEATH LIKE?

**It is like a sound sleep. There is no consciousness**, for the brain is totally gone. When David is resurrected it will seem but the next instant after he died: “the twinkling of the eye,” as it were.

**In the Bible, it is significant that death is called “sleep” 54 times.** Paul said this about death:

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.”—*1 Thessalonians 4:13* (also *1 Corinthians 15:18-20*).

The Bible is very certain about this matter: “The dead know not any thing” (*Ecclesiastes 9:5*).

The prophet Daniel wrote: “Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” *Daniel 12:2*.

#### **Jesus described death in very clear words:**

“Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said His disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that He had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.”—*John 11:11-14*.

Thomas Gray, in his well-known poem “*Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*,” wrote this:

“The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power, And all that beauty, all that wealth e’er gave, Await alike the inevitable hour: **The paths of glory lead but to the grave.**”

“Can storied urn or animated bust, Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath? Can Honor’s voice provoke the silent dust, Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of Death?”

#### THERE IS HOPE BEYOND THE GRAVE

**Is there hope beyond the grave? Yes, there is! for the faithful who, during this life loved God and served Him!**

The promise is given us in the Old Testament:

“I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction.”—*Hosea 13:14*.

#### **Two prominent men were avowed skeptics.**

One was the eminent Gilbert West; the other was Lord Lyttelton, the famous English statesman. The two men agreed that Christianity should be destroyed. But they decided that, in order to do it, they must disprove His resurrection. If Christ was not raised from the dead, they said, He could not later raise anyone else from the grave.

The two men divided the task between them. At a much later time, they once again met to compare notes. Both had been confronted with the indisputable facts about the resurrection. Each one confessed that a remarkable change had occurred in his own life as a result of having, through his study, met the risen Christ—and each had become a confirmed Christian!

#### THE TRUTH OF THE RESURRECTION

**The error, that the righteous dead go to heaven when they die, undermines—and destroys—the great truth of the resurrection!**

**But the clear teaching of the Bible is that there will be a resurrection.** It is as certain as the fact that Christ has already risen from the dead.

“If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

“But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming.”—*1 Corinthians 15:17-23*.

**Christ is the source of life. If we have Christ, we have the promise of life!** There may be an interruption for a time in the silence of the grave, but afterward, the joyful reunion with Him forever.

**Because Christ was raised from the dead, just so surely His faithful ones will one day soon, at Christ’s Second Advent, come forth to an eternal, glorious life.** Paul said that “Christ” was “the firstfruits of them that slept” (*1 Corinthians 15:20*). Elsewhere he said, “Afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming” (*verse 23*).

“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

“Wherefore comfort one another with these

words.”—*1 Thessalonians 4:16-18*.

This is why the resurrection from the dead is the real hope of those who “sorrow not, even as others” (*verse 13*).

But, in addition, the Apostle Paul made it clear that **Christians who live to see the Second Coming of Christ will go to heaven “together with” the resurrected righteous**. They will “not prevent [Old English for “go before”] them which are asleep” (*verse 15*).

**Those who have already died will not reach heaven before those who live to see Christ return for His faithful ones.**

“God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”—*Hebrews 11:40*.

**Paul said he would receive his reward at Christ’s Second Advent, and not before.**

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”—*2 Timothy 4:8*.

Peter declared that a thousand years after David’s death, he still was not yet in heaven (*Acts 2:29, 34*).

Paul goes so far as to say that if the dead do not rise, then those who have died believing in Christ are perished; and that is the end of it all (*1 Corinthians 15:16-18*). **How thankful we can be that, for God’s faithful ones, death will not be the end of it all!**

#### THE TIME TO RECEIVE IMMORTALITY

Christ paid the ransom price, by His death on the cross, so His faithful followers could be redeemed from the grave.

“I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction.”—*Hosea 13:14*.

**At Christ’s return, all His redeemed ones will, for the first time, receive immortality, and will forever keep it!**

“Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”—*1 Corinthians 15:51-54*.

“Blessed rest for the weary righteous! Time, be it long or short, is but a moment to them. They sleep; they are awakened by the trump of God to a glorious

immortality.”—*Great Controversy*, 550.

**What will God’s faithful ones look like when, at Christ’s coming, they will become immortal?**

Speaking of Christ and His Second Coming, Paul finishes with these words:

“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”—*Philippians 3:20-21*.

“Whosoever believeth” on Christ will have “everlasting life” (*John 3:16*). Everlasting life is a gift of God to believers. “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” said Jesus (*John 14:6*). It is those who follow Him who shall live eternally

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.”—*John 10:27-28*.

#### HOW SHOULD WE PREPARE?

**What must we do now in order to receive this eternal life?**

We must humbly, obediently, follow the Lamb. We must partake of Christ, as we study His Word and put it into our lives. Through His enabling grace, we must daily become more and more like Him.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”—*John 6:53-54*.

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”—*1 John 5:11-13*.

“He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”—*John 5:24*.

**An inscription on a crypt** in Allegheny Observatory, University of Pittsburgh, reads:

“We have loved the stars too fondly to be fearful of the night.”

If we have seen Jesus, the Light of the world, the Bright and Morning Star, we need never be fearful of the night of death which is ahead of so many of us.

**One day, when Michael Faraday, the great scientist, entered his laboratory**, he found that one of his workmen had accidentally dropped a little, highly valued silver cup into a strong acid bath. Within a

short time it had totally dissolved.

Faraday cast in another acid—and soon all of the silver precipitated in the form of a shapeless mass. In a few days it came back from the silversmith a more beautiful cup than before.

**So it is at death. The bodies of Christ's faithful ones molder into dust and nothing more can be found of them. But when He shall return,—He will restore to each one a more beautiful body—one which is immortal.**

The voice of Jesus, sounding as clear as a trumpet, will, at His Second Coming, open the tomb of every saint; and with the righteous living they will be rewarded together with eternal life with Christ.

“At the sounding of the trumpet, when the saints are gathered home, We will greet each other by the crystal sea; When the Lord Himself from heaven to His glory bids them come, What a gathering of the faithful that will be!”

*What a gathering of the faithful that will be!*  
It will be greater than any church service you have ever attended! Oh, my friend, we must be faithful now, so we can be there at that time!

“Let us sing a song that will cheer us by the way,  
In a little while we're going home; For the night will end in the everlasting day, In a little while we're going home.”

#### **MY COMMITMENT**

Oh, my Father in heaven, unless Jesus comes while I am still alive, I am going to die someday. Please, Father, help me to cling daily to Jesus, so I can be raised from the grave to eternal life! I want to live with Jesus forever in heaven! Please, Father, help me daily to warn others to prepare so they too will be ready! In Jesus' name I ask it, Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—What will finally happen to those who have never accepted Christ. Are any of them suffering now? Here are important facts you will want to know.

A Complete Evangelistic Sermon: Chapter Eleven

# The Final Death of the Wicked

What the Bible Says about Hell

In a publication of “religious instruction” for children, published a number of years ago, is found the following word picture of hell and its tortures.

“Look into this prison. In the middle of it there is a boy, a young man. He is silent; despair is on him. He stands straight up. His eyes are burning like two burning coals. Two long flames come out of his ears. His breathing is difficult. Sometimes he opens his mouth and a breath of blazing fire rolls out of it.

“But listen! There is a sound just like that of a kettle boiling. Is it really a kettle which is boiling? No; then what is it? Here is what it is:

“The blood is boiling in the scalded veins of that boy. The brain is boiling and bubbling in his head. The marrow is boiling in his bones! Ask him, put the question to him: why is he thus tormented? His answer is, that when he was alive, his blood boiled to do very wicked things, and he did them, and it was for that he went to dancing-houses, public-houses, and theaters.

“Ask him, does he think the punishment greater than he deserves? ‘No,’ he says, ‘my punishment is not greater than I deserve; it is just.’ I knew it not so while on earth, but I know now that it is just. There is a just and a terrible God. He is terrible to sinners in hell—but He is just!”—*J. Furniss, “The Sight of Hell,” in Tracts for Spiritual Reading, Sec. 27, p. 20.*

**At the front of the above booklet, an important churchman wrote that this was good reading for children!**

“I have carefully read over this Little Volume for Children and have found nothing whatever in it contrary to the doctrines of Holy Faith; but, on the contrary, a great deal to charm, instruct and edify our youthful classes, for whose benefit it has been written.”—*William Meagher, Vicar General, Dublin, Ireland, December 14, 1855.*

**It is tragic that such information is given to children to read, when it is just not true!** It portrays God as an evil beast that everyone should want to run away from. When, in fact, He is our kind, loving heavenly Father. **Yes, there will be hellfire someday,—but it will only be for an extremely short period of time—and then those who are lost will mercifully no longer exist—forever.** In this chapter we are going to prove this to you from God’s Inspired book, the Bible.

**There is a time coming when God will do “His**

**work, His strange work;** and bring to pass His act, His strange act” (*Isaiah 28:21*). It will indeed be a *strange act* for the One who died to save all of mankind. It will be a *strange act* for One who prayed while they crucified Him, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (*Luke 23:34*).

**It is a tragedy that millions of people have become unbelievers and skeptics, because they accepted the error that God will burn people forever!** Many have been driven to insanity by the harrowing thought of unsaved loved ones in the never-ending torments of a burning hell. Yes, it is indeed tragic! Men and women are simply not able to reconcile the false teaching of eternal torment with the wonderful truth of God’s deep love for mankind.

The brilliant attorney Robert Ingersoll is an example of one who would not have become a leading infidel—had it not been for a misunderstanding of the truth about the final punishment of the wicked.

When he was a child, Robert’s father told him that there were infants in hell not longer than a span in length, who were destined to burn throughout eternity.

Young Robert thought, “If that is what God does, I want nothing to do with Him!” His logical mind correctly recognized that eternal punishment for the sins of a brief lifetime on earth would not be just.

## THE TRUTH ABOUT THE THREE WORDS FOR “HELL”

**In the Bible, our English word, “hell,” has three meanings:**

**1 - Our English word, “hell,” is sometimes translated from the Hebrew word for the “grave.”** The Hebrew word frequently used for “grave” is *sheol*. One example would be Psalm 16:10, where *sheol* (“grave”) has been translated as “hell.”

“For Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.”—*Psalm 16:10.*

The above text is quoted by Peter in Acts 2:27, where the Greek word for “grave” (*hades*) is used. But, unfortunately, it is incorrectly translated as “hell.”

Then, in verse 31, Peter explains that Psalm 16:10 was a prophecy about Christ!

“He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.”—*Acts 2:31-32.*

Of course, we know that Christ was not burning in hell! In reality, Christ went into the grave at His death after His crucifixion. But He was not left in the grave, but was raised from the dead early on the third day.

The word, *hades*, is used eleven times in the

New Testament. In 1 Corinthians 15:55 it is translated “grave.” But elsewhere it is translated “hell,” signifying the grave or “state in the grave.”

**2 - Hell correctly signifies a “place of burning.”** In the New Testament the word is *gehenna*, or the “Valley of Hinnom.” This was a deep, narrow glen south of Jerusalem, which was used as a garbage dump, where the bodies of dead animals and city refuse were cast.

What the fire did not destroy, the worms consumed. It was thus a type of *complete* annihilation. *Gehenna*, the place of burning, is used twelve times, and is always translated “hell.”

**3 - In one place the Greek word for “a place of darkness” is translated as “hell.”**

“God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.”—2 Peter 2:4.

The Greek word here is *tartaroo* (derived from *tartarus*), not *gehenna* or *hades*. The above text pictures it as a place of darkness, which describes the darkness surrounding Satan and his angels when they were separated from God and heaven. Wherever Satan and his followers are, a dark cloud of evil and misery surrounds them.

#### WHERE DO ALL MEN GO AT DEATH?

**All men go to the grave at death, that is, to *hades* or *sheol*.** Job said,

“For I know that Thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.”—Job 30:23.

This house of death is the grave. “If I wait, the grave is mine house” (Job 17:13).

**The grave is an impartial one, for everyone goes there at death.** “There is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked” (Ecclesiastes 9:2).

“What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?”—Psalm 89:48.

The rich and the poor, the high and the low, the righteous and the wicked; all go to that place, the grave.

“All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.”—Ecclesiastes 3:20.

Yes, death is an enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26), and the grave is not a comforting thought,—but we can thank God that there is hope beyond the grave!

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”—Revelation 14:13.

And we can also rejoice that **the wicked (and everyone else) slumbers in silence in the grave, rather than screaming in torture and agony. There**

**is no pain in the grave.**

#### WHEN WILL THE RIGHTEOUS DEAD COME OUT OF THE GRAVE?

**God’s faithful ones will come out of their graves at the Second Coming of Christ:** at the sound of the “last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible” (1 Corinthians 15:52).

“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

“Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”—1 Thessalonians 4:16-18.

**Christ promised His faithful ones that He would one day return for them.**

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”—John 14:1-3.

**This promise will soon be fulfilled!** At the sound of the “trump of God,” the saints who have slept in silence, unconscious of the passing of time, will suddenly be awakened. Some have slumbered for thousands of years; others only for a brief rest in the grave. But, to all, the time will seem the same—as in a moment, or “the twinkling of an eye.” They will come forth with faces glowing with joy, health, and immortality,—and will go with Christ to heaven.

#### WHEN WILL THE WICKED COME OUT OF THE GRAVE?

Paul tells us that **there will be “a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust”** (Acts 24:15). Other passages of Scripture confirm this:

“Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”—Daniel 12:2.

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice,

“And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”—John 5:28-29.

**The righteous are raised at the Second Advent of Christ. But the wicked are not raised until one thousand years later.**

“The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”—Revelation 20:5.

This thousand years, or “millennium” as it is called, will be discussed in much greater detail later in this book.

#### **WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE WICKED?**

**Soon after the wicked are resurrected, they together with the devil, his evil angels, death, and the grave, will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20: 10-15). This is the gehenna, the actual burning hell.**

The Apostle Peter declared:

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.”—*2 Peter 2:9*.

He also said that the earth itself is “reserved unto fire against the day of judgment” (*2 Peter 3:7*), and that “the elements shall melt with fervent heat” (*verse 10*).

John explains that **fire will come down from God out of heaven and devour the wicked**, along with the devil, death, and the grave, in a “lake of fire.” This is called the “second death” (*Revelation 20:9-14*).

#### **WHERE WILL THIS FIRE OCCUR?**

It is important that we understand that **this fire occurs on the surface of the earth, not somewhere beneath it!**

“As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.”—*Matthew 13:40*.

“Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”—*Matthew 3:12*.

“These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”—*Revelation 19:20*.

“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”—*Revelation 20:14-15*.

“Fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.”—*Revelation 20:9*.

God has promised that He will bring Satan to ashes upon the earth (*Ezekiel 28:18*)—not underground somewhere.

**This fire on the surface of the earth will end in death, not eternal life.**

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”—*Revelation 21:8*.

“He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.”—*Revelation 2:11*.

**This fact, that hell will burn on the surface**

**of the earth, provides yet another proof that there could be no burning hell now. It must be yet future—for it is not now burning anywhere in our world.**

Since the wicked perish in this burning gehenna, and the earth itself becomes a molten lake of fire, we can understand more clearly the Bible statement that the wicked will be “recompensed” here on the earth (*Proverbs 11:31*), and that they shall be “brought forth” from the grave to this “day of wrath” (*Job 32:30*).

Jesus Himself said that “the tares are the children of the wicked one,” and “as therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of the world” (*Matthew 13:38, 40*).

All of these passages provide ample evidence that the fiery end to the wicked, this fiery hell, is yet future. At the present time, not one person is burning in hell.

**Second, this fact also shows that the burning hell cannot last very long—because the promise has been given to God’s faithful ones that they will inherit the earth!** But they will never be able to inherit it—if the stifling smoke and fire of hell were to continue here forever.

“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.”—*Matthew 5:5*. (See also *Psalms 37:11, 29; Isaiah 65:17-25*.)

“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”—*Matthew 13:43*.

“But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever . . .

“And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.”—*Daniel 7:18, 27*.

**The fire will be on the surface of the earth, although not for very long. Then it will end.**

#### **ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE THAT THIS FIRE IS YET FUTURE**

In a later chapter, we will discuss the future millennium, at the end of which the wicked will be raised from their graves and be burned up. Here are two other passages which show that this hellfire is yet future:

“The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.”—*Matthew 13:39-40*.

“So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire.”—*Matthew 13:49-50*.

## HOW MUCH OF MAN WILL BE CAST INTO THIS FIRE?

**The error is taught that only part of people will go into hell. But the Bible teaches that the entire bodies of the wicked will be consumed in it.**

Jesus warned us nine times about the “burning” hell, the *gehenna* fire. Here are two of them. They make it clear that **the whole man, soul, and body is cast into hellfire.**

“Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”—*Matthew 10:28*.

“If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.”—*Matthew 18:8-9*.

**We have earlier learned that, at death, the entire person goes into the grave,—and there is no fire in the grave!** All this adds to the evidence that the burning hell is yet future.

## WHO IS THE FIRE FOR?

**This fire was not intended for people, but for the devil and his angels. However, those who choose Satan as their leader will also be destroyed with him in that fire.**

“Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”—*Matthew 25:41*.

Satan is the root, his followers are the branches. All will alike perish.

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.”—*Malachi 4:1*.

## HOW LONG DOES THIS FIRE LAST?

**The meaning of everlasting and eternal—This fire of the future is called “everlasting” or eternal.** “These shall go away into everlasting punishment” (*Matthew 25:46*). **It is a punishment which will end when the fire goes out, but the consequences are everlasting. The wicked receive a punishment which is “everlasting” in its effects.**

The question may be asked: If whatever is cast into this fire is completely consumed, why would the fire always be kept burning? The answer is that it will not.

**Sodom and Gomorrah are examples** of how this kind of fire works. The Bible says they were

totally “destroyed” long ago (*Genesis 19:29; Luke 17:29*). But Jude says they were burned up by “eternal fire.”

“Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”—*Jude 7*.

We know where those two cities were located; and, although they were burned with “eternal fire,” **they are not burning today.** They received fire *with eternal effects*. Peter explains how the fire affected those two cities:

“And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.”—*2 Peter 2:6*.

**So those two cities received “eternal fire” which, after it ended, left only “ashes.”** Elsewhere, we are told that they were quickly destroyed (“overthrown as in a moment”; *Lamentations 4:6*).

**The meaning of unquenchable—This is fire which devours so thoroughly, that it cannot be put out until it has completed its work. For this reason, it is called “unquenchable”;** that is, it cannot be quenched or put out until it is finished. But when the wicked—including Satan—are totally destroyed, then the fire will go out.

“He will . . . gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”—*Matthew 3:12*.

*Here is a Bible example which shows that “unquenchable fire” does not last forever:*

Because of continued Sabbath desecration by the Jews, **God threatened the destruction of Jerusalem by a fire that “shall not be quenched”** (*Jeremiah 17:27*). That fire later occurred (*Jeremiah 52:12-13; 2 Chronicles 36:19*).

**Jerusalem is not still burning today.** “Unquenchable” fire is fire that cannot be put out until it has consumed everything. **Unquenchable fire burns everything up and then burns out.** In the same way the wicked will be destroyed.

“Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”—*Mark 9:44*.

A city-wide conflagration once enveloped Chicago. It was an unstoppable fire which could not be quenched. But that does not mean that Chicago is still burning.

**The meaning of “their worm that dieth not”**—The “worm that dieth not” is a figure taken from the refuse dump in the Valley of Hinnom, on the south side of ancient Jerusalem. The fact that garbage was constantly thrown into this dump,

which kept the fires always burning there, was the surest proof that whatever was cast into it would be entirely consumed. —But when nothing more was thrown in, the fire eventually ended, after having done a thorough job of destruction.

Speaking of the enemies of the Lord, Isaiah said, “The worm shall eat them like wool” (*Isaiah 51:8*). This is a picture of being put out of existence.

**What the fire did not destroy the worms devoured. It is a symbol of complete and final destruction**—total annihilation of sinners.

The Bible also speaks of “eternal redemption” (*Hebrews 9:12*) and “eternal judgment” (*Hebrews 6:2*). But this does not mean redemption going on through all eternity, or an unending work of judgment. No, both are eventually finished, but with results which will last forever.

**The meaning of forever and ever—Why is this fire said to be “forever and ever”? (*Revelation 14:11* and *20:10*).** In order to understand it, we must see how this phrase is used elsewhere in the Bible. When we do, we discover that **the Bible usage means “as long as it lasts,” which should frequently be translated, “as long as he lives.”**

For instance, in 1 Samuel 1:22 we find that **Hannah lent Samuel to the Lord “forever.” It means, “as long as he lives.” Verse 28 translates it in that manner: “As long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord.”** (Similar passages are 1 Samuel 27:12; Job 41:4.) In Exodus 21:6, a man can volunteer to be a slave “forever”; but, if it really meant *forever*, there would be slavery in heaven! Christ is called “a priest forever” (*Hebrews 5:6*); yet, after sin is blotted out and the Second Advent occurs, Christ’s work as a priest will end.

Jonah was said to be in the belly of the great fish forever (*Jonah 2:6*), yet it only lasted three days and nights (*Jonah 1:17*). Leprosy was said to cleave to Gehazi and his offspring forever (*2 Kings 5:27*), and Philemon was counseled to receive Onesimus forever (*Philemon 15*). The Passover was to be kept “forever” (*Exodus 12:24*), but it ended at the cross (see *Hebrews 9:24-26*). Aaron and his sons were to offer incense “forever” (*1 Chronicles 23:13*), and have an “everlasting priesthood” (*Exodus 40:15*). Yet this priesthood, with its offerings of incense, ended at Calvary (see *Hebrews 7:11-14*).

Liddell and Scott’s *Greek Lexicon*, the most exhaustive research work of its kind, gives the following definition of the Greek word, translated “forever,” in the KJV:

“A space or period of time, especially a lifetime, life . . . Also one’s time of life, age: the age of man . . . 2. A long space of time, eternity . . . 3. Later, a space of time clearly defined and marked out, an era, age,

. . . this present life, this world.”

As long as the wicked live, as long as consciousness lasts, they will be in the flames. For some this will only be a few moments. For Satan it will be longest of all. Yet we are told that even he will eventually cease to exist. “Nevermore shalt thou be” (*Ezekiel 28:19*) will be what God says of Satan, who is destroyed in that fire. And the verse before it says:

“And I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth.”—*Ezekiel 28:18*.

**It is clear that these words, “forever” and “forever and ever,” must be compared with other passages of Scripture in order to properly understand them.** In this chapter we have found abundant evidence that the wicked do not burn without end. “They shall be destroyed forever” (*Psalms 92:7*) means that *the results* of that destruction will last forever. The wicked “shall not see life” (*John 3:36*). “No murder hath eternal life abiding in him” (*1 John 3:15*).

This fire will be so thorough in destroying the wicked, that when it is done, not a hot coal or any fire will remain:

“Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.”—*Isaiah 47:14*.

While it is taught in many pulpits that all the wicked will burn forever, the Bible, in stark contrast, clearly teaches that **some will suffer only a short time, while other more wicked people will suffer a little longer.**

“And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.”—*Luke 12:47-48*.

God does not delight in punishment. **It is His strange act.**

“He shall be wroth . . . that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act.”—*Isaiah 28:21*.

**But sin must be eradicated. In fairness to the universe there is no other way to deal with it.** The rebellion has to be brought to an end. This planet, if one sinner were left on it, would be a deadly virus forever threatening the universe.

#### A QUICK, TOTAL DESTRUCTION

The Bible is quite clear about this. **The gehenna hell will burn until “both soul and body” are destroyed.** “Fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body” (*Matthew 10:28*).

This hell will burn until the wicked are devoured (*Revelation 20:9*). That will be the “second death.” **It**

**will be a total everlasting death—oblivion,—not an everlasting, burning life (verse 14).**

“The Lord preserveth all them that love Him: but all the wicked will He destroy.”—*Psalm 145:20*.

**Some of the strongest words are used by the Scripture writers, in the original Hebrew and Greek in which the Bible was written, to emphasize the total destruction of the wicked.** They will not only “burn” (*katio*; *Revelation 19:20*; *21:8*), but they shall be “burned up” (*katakaino*; *2 Peter 3:10*; *Matthew 3:12*). They shall not only be “destroyed” (*apollumi*; *Matthew 21:41*; *Mark 1:24*), but be “utterly destroyed” (*exolothreuo*; *Acts 3:23*, *R.V.*). They shall not only be “consumed” (*tamam*; *Psalm 104:35*), and “consume away,” (*kalah*; *Psalm 37:20*), but be “utterly consumed” (*apollumi* in the *Septuagint*; *Psalm 73:19*).

**It is obvious that the wicked will be completely blotted out of existence by this fire. That is why it is called “the second death.”** At the first death, the wicked go into the grave, as does everyone else. But only the wicked experience this second death, which marks the end of the sinner, the end of death, and the end of the grave.

The fact that the wicked “will be cut off” is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament. The word, “cut off,” is *karath* and means “totally destroy” (as it is used in *Ezekiel 28:16*). “All the wicked will He destroy” (*Psalm 145:20*).

“Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.”—*Psalm 37:37-38*.

**Notice in the two following statements that, as soon as the wicked are destroyed, the redeemed will inherit the earth:**

“For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”—*Psalm 37:9-11*.

“Wait on the Lord, and keep His way, and He shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.”—*Psalm 37:34*.

#### **THE WICKED ARE LIKENED TO VERY PERISHABLE MATERIALS**

During that brief period of time in which they finally perish forever, **the wicked are compared to fragile substances which are burned up quickly.**

**Nothing burns as quickly as hay and stubble! After a fire goes out, only the “ashes” remain, and soon they are gone also.** The following passage compares those burned as being like “stubble,” and

the rather quick result to “ashes.”

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

“But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

“And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.”—*Malachi 4:1-3*.

The wicked are said to be like “the chaff which the wind driveth away” (*Psalm 1:4*). Isaiah says that “the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble” (*Isaiah 40:24*).

**The wicked are to be utterly destroyed—consumed away as quickly as animal “fat,” changed into “smoke,” and brought to “ashes.”**

“But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.”—*Psalm 37:20*.

#### **GOD’S MERCIFUL PLAN**

**Sin and sinners will be forever gone from the universe. The righteous could not be happy throughout eternity if they knew that loved ones were forever suffering in flames!** No, no. God has something wonderful planned for all. The righteous will live in continual happiness forever. **The wicked, who could not be happy in the peace of heaven, will no longer exist. It will be merciful of God to put them out of their selfish misery.**

The destruction of the wicked will be quick and complete, leaving only stubble burned into ashes (*Malachi 4:1-3*). And it will be final.

“They shall be as though they had not been.”—*Obadiah 16*.

**It will not take long for the wicked to be consumed.**

“As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more.”—*Proverbs 10:25*.

“For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

“But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”—*Psalm 37:10-11*.

**Through sin they have forfeited the right to life and an immortal existence. Instead, they have chosen the way of death and destruction.** Because of the way in which they used their probationary time while living in this world, they squandered their final opportunities to return to God.

**Their destruction will, in fact, be an act of love and mercy on the part of God; for to perpetuate their lives would only be to perpetuate sin, sorrow, suffering, and misery.**

We are told that God takes “no pleasure in the death of the wicked” (*Ezekiel 33:11*). He would have saved every one of them if He could. But they would not come to Him that they might be saved.

“Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.”—*Ezekiel 18:31-32*.

The power and authority of the divine government shall be employed to put down rebellion; yet **all the manifestations of retributive justice will be perfectly consistent with the character of God as a merciful, long-suffering, benevolent being.**

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”—*Romans 6:23*.

“See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live.”—*Deuteronomy 30:15-16*.

**However, there must come a time when they perish,** and He has reserved them unto the day of judgment. In view of that fact, why should anyone wish to rush them off to hell as soon as they die?

**The wicked will burn in fire on the surface of the earth, yet God’s promise is that the righteous will inherit the earth** and make it their home forever.

Here are three Bible passages which tell us that **the wicked will be blotted out before the redeemed inherit the earth:**

“Wait on the Lord, and keep His way, and **He shall exalt thee to inherit the land:** when the wicked are cut off.”—*Psalms 37:34*.

“For evildoers shall be cut off: but **those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.** For yet a little while, and **the wicked shall not be:** yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. **But the meek shall inherit the earth;** and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”—*Psalms 37:9-11*.

“For, behold, **the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven;** and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: **and the day that cometh shall burn them up,** saith the Lord of hosts, **that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.**

“But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; **and ye shall go forth,** and grow up as calves of the

stall. And **ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes** under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.”—*Malachi 4:1-3*.

**Then, when the fire ends, the experience of sin will be forever over, and God’s original plan of peopling the earth with a race of holy, happy beings will be carried out.**

“Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”—*2 Peter 3:13-14*.

“God Himself was crucified with Christ; for Christ was one with the Father. **Few give thought to the suffering that sin has caused our Creator.** All heaven suffered in Christ’s agony; but that suffering did not begin or end with His manifestation in humanity. The cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart of God. **Every departure from the right, every deed of cruelty, every failure of humanity to reach His ideal, brings grief to Him.** When there came upon Israel the calamities that were the sure result of separation from God—subjugation by their enemies, cruelty, and death—it is said that ‘His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.’ ‘In all their affliction He was afflicted: . . . and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old’ (*Judges 10:16; Isa. 63:9*).”—*Amazing Grace, 189*.

“His Spirit ‘maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.’ As **the ‘whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain’** (*Romans 8:26, 22*), **the heart of the infinite Father is pained in sympathy.** Our world is a vast lazarus house, a scene of misery that we dare not allow our thoughts to dwell upon. Did we realize it as it is, the burden would be too terrible. **Yet God feels it all.**”—*Education, 263-264*.

“Not a sigh is breathed, not a pain felt, not a grief pierces the soul, but the throb vibrates to the Father’s heart.”—*Desire of Ages, 356*.

“He who knows the depths of the world’s misery and despair, knows by what means to bring relief . . . Although human beings have abused their mercies, wasted their talents, and lost the dignity of godlike manhood, the Creator is to be glorified in their redemption.”—*Education, p. 270*.

## SUMMARY

**One of the most beloved verses in the Bible—John 3:16—clearly states that the unrepentant ones will not live forever, but will “perish.”** The entire passage also explains that they will perish because they refused to accept Christ as their Saviour.

“Whosoever believeth in Him *should not perish,* but have eternal life.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him *should not perish*, but have everlasting life.

“For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.

“He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”—*John 3:15-18*.

The righteous will be “recompensed [rewarded] at the resurrection of the just” (*Luke 14:14*). *Oh, what a glorious day that will be!*

“As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness.”—*Psalms 17:15*.

**The bodies of the redeemed will come forth from the grave without any traces of age, sickness, or flaws** (*1 Corinthians 15:42-44; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Corinthians 15:54-55; Luke 20:36*).

**But a thousand years later, the wicked will be raised—and then forever perish. It will be a death, and total destruction which lasts forever.**

“What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?”—*1 Peter 4:17*.

“For the wages of sin is death.”—*Romans 6:23*.

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die.”—*Ezekiel 18:4*.

“Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction.”—*2 Thessalonians 1:9*.

“But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.”—*Psalms 37:20*.

“And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.”—*Revelation 20:9*.

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”—*Revelation 21:8*.

“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”—*1 Corinthians 15:26*.

“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”—*Matthew 13:43*.

“Wherefore,” the Apostle Paul tells us, “comfort one another with these words” (*1 Thessalonians 4:18*).

### MY COMMITMENT

Father in heaven, help me to do what I can to lead others around me to Christ, so they will be able to inherit eternal life. This life is so short, and so many important decisions need to be made, so that people will not be lost. In Jesus’s name I ask

it. Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—Answers to several important questions which people ask about the other side of death. This will help fill in many important details.

# Questions and Answers about Death

## Additional Important Bible Facts

Clarence Darrow, the famous criminal lawyer, once held a debate with a rabbi, a priest, and a minister on the subject of immortality. All three clergymen used symbols, similes, and allegories to defend their position that the soul of man is indestructible and not subject to the power of death.

When Darrow arose, he said, "These gentlemen never once used the Bible to prove their assertions, much less did they quote from its pages."

However, there are some difficult passages in the Bible which are "hard to be understood" (2 Peter 3:15-16). When there is apparent contradiction or seeming difference of meaning, two things should be kept in mind.

First, difficult texts should be studied in the light of the general teaching of the Bible on that particular subject. Second, all lines of Bible doctrine should run parallel. For instance, the Bible teaches that the judgment occurs down at the end of time. So we would be out of harmony with Scripture if we believed God took good people to heaven at death and put bad people into flames at death, when as yet they had not yet been judged in the final judgment.

### QUESTIONS ANSWERED

So here are six answers to difficult passages concerning death:

**1 - The thief on the cross**—Jesus told the repentant thief, "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). Did Jesus take the thief to heaven that day?

First, Jesus did not Himself go to paradise that day. Paradise is where the tree of life is (Revelation 2:7). That is in heaven at the throne of God (Revelation 22:1-2). Jesus did not ascend to heaven until the day of His resurrection. To Mary, He said at that time, "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father" (John 20:17).

Second, although Jesus died that day, the thief did not (John 19:30-33). He was taken down from the cross just before sunset, while still alive, so he could be put back onto a cross after the hours of the Sabbath. Although the thief was taken down from the cross over the Sabbath, historians tell us

that he would have been put back on it on the day after the Sabbath. This is because death by crucifixion usually took several days.

Third, there is no punctuation in the original. When Luke wrote those words, punctuation marks had not yet been invented.

So, in order to make the verse agree with the above Bible facts, the comma should be moved from before "today" to after "today": "Verily I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with Me in paradise." It was on that day—the day of Christ's worst humiliation—that He could give the glorious promise that the thief would be saved and later be with Christ in heaven! What a promise is that for the rest of us!

Notice that the thief did not ask to be taken to paradise then. He asked, "Lord remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." That is exactly when he will be remembered and taken into that kingdom.

**2 - Shall never die**—What did Christ mean when He told Mary that those who believed in Him would never die? The entire passage explains it:

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."—John 11:25-26.

Both the righteous and wicked will be resurrected, but only those believing in Christ will live forever. The rest will die the second death (Revelation 20:13-15).

God is looking to the future when He says that the wicked are dead even while they live (1 Timothy 5:6). They go down into Christless graves, rise in the resurrection to receive judgment, and go down in the "second death" (Revelation 21:8). And God is looking to the future when He says that the righteous have eternal life.

This also explains why Christ said to the unbelieving Jews, "Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life" (John 5:40).

But the Christian, who has accepted Christ, has life in his heart. He has everlasting life abiding in him—as long as he remains faithful to Christ. This also explains why Paul said that Christ "abolished death" (2 Timothy 1:10); whereas, he elsewhere said that God's faithful ones do not conquer death until the resurrection, when "death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:54). Thank God that the time is coming when "death and hell" are "cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:14). Then, and not till then, will death truly be abolished.

**3 - The spirits in prison**—Some believe that

during the time between His crucifixion and His resurrection, Christ went and preached to the spirits in prison. Here is the unusual passage:

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.”—*1 Peter 3:18-20*.

First, notice that **Christ preached to them by “the Spirit,”** and that word is capitalized. So whatever preaching was done was accomplished through the Holy Spirit.

Second, **this preaching was done while Noah was building the Ark,** not long before the Flood covered the earth (*Genesis 6*).

“And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man.”—*Genesis 6:3*.

In other words, God’s Spirit pleaded with men through the preaching of Noah.

Third, **the preaching was done to “spirits which are in prison.”** The words, “spirit” and “soul” are often used when talking about people. David prayed, “Bring my soul out of prison” (*Psalms 142:7*), Paul spoke of being into captivity to sin (*Romans 7*).

It was the work of Christ to open “the prison to them that are bound” (*Isaiah 42:7*).

**In summary, Christ preached by the Holy Spirit, while Noah was building the Ark, and He did it to the “spirits in prison,” that is, to those individuals whose sinful lives were bound in the prison house of sin.**

**4 - Under punishment until the judgment**—In the *Revised Standard Version* of *2 Peter 2:9*, we read:

“The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.”—*2 Peter 2:9, RSV*.

This suggests that, after death, the wicked suffer punishment prior to the day of judgment.

First, this concept contradicts the whole teaching of Scripture.

Second, “to punish” may be translated to show immediate activity, or eventual purpose.

The *RSV* translates it to show immediate activity:

“... to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.”—*2 Peter 2:9, RSV*.

The *King James Version* translates it to show eventual purpose:

“... and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.”—*2 Peter 2:9, KJV*.

There is a great difference between the two translations! **The KJV agrees with the rest of Scripture, and the RSV does not.**

**Elsewhere in this same epistle, the RSV correctly translates the word:** “kept until the judgment” (*2 Peter 2:4, RSV*), indicating that the fallen angels are not at present suffering punishment, but later will in the time of the judgment.

**5 - The rich man and Lazarus**—In the parable of *Luke 16:19-31*, the rich man died and went to hell. “Being in torments,” he called to the beggar Lazarus, who had also died and was in Abraham’s bosom.

What is the meaning of this?

First, God sometimes speaks of the future as present.

“God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.”—*Romans 4:17*.

However, **the story of the rich man and Lazarus is a parable, and cannot be regarded as literal. It comes in the midst of a long series of parables.** Parables often teach some main lesson, but should not be held to every detail. (See *Judges 9:6-20*, for example.)

As He prepared to give this parable, Jesus was rebuking the covetous Pharisees (*Luke 16:14*), by showing that the rich may fare well here, but not hereafter. **He used one of their own traditions to drive this point home.**

**First, let us consider Lazarus,** and then the rich man.

Lazarus is represented as being carried by the angels to “Abraham’s bosom.” However, **it is at the Second Coming of Christ, not at death, that the angels gather the elect** (*Matthew 24:31*).

In addition, **Abraham would find it difficult to hold all the redeemed next to his chest.** So this cannot possibly be literal.

There was another Lazarus, a literal one, who died (*John 11:14-44*). He was the brother of Mary and Martha. After four days dead in the grave, when Jesus called him to life, He said, “Lazarus, come forth.” He did not say, “Come from Abraham’s bosom.”

After being restored to life, this literal Lazarus had nothing to say about Abraham’s bosom, or anything else that had happened during those four days; for “the dead know not anything” (*Ecclesiastes 9:5*). When a real person dies, “his thoughts perish” (*Psalms 146:4*). So the Lazarus of the parable cannot be taken literally.

**Then there is the rich man** in the parable. In the symbolism of this story, he was in hell with a body. He had eyes, tongue, etc. (*Luke 16:23-24*).

### **How did his body get into hell fire instead of into the grave?**

Of this rich man we read, "And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame" (*Luke 16:23-24*). **The word "hell" used here is *hades*, which means "the grave."** But there is no fire in the grave, so we here have still further evidence that this parable cannot be taken literally.

The request of Lazarus, to dip the tip of his finger in water and come through the flames to cool the rich man's tongue, is obviously not literal. **How much moisture would remain on the finger and how much relief would it give?**

The climactic point of the entire parable is found in verse 31:

"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."—*Luke 16:31*.

Astoundingly, not long afterward—a literal Lazarus was raised from the dead (*John 11:43*)—and the Jews that Jesus was speaking to would not believe that either!

The real lesson of the parable is that prosperity in this life does not guarantee prosperity hereafter,—but that it is now that we must prepare for eternity!

"For the grave cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth."—*Isaiah 38:18*.

#### **There is no second chance!**

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."—*2 Corinthians 6:2*.

**Now is the time** to speak words of kindness, and do deeds of love. Now is the time to accept Christ as our Saviour and faithfully obey all that He tells us in Scripture.

Someone has said, "The more of earth we want, the less of heaven we'll get."

**Early in World War II**, Colonel Warren J. Clear was ordered by his superior officer to leave Corregidor just before it fell. He was to board a submarine at midnight. In his orders were these words, "*Be ready to go aboard. No personal baggage.*"

When we say good-bye to this world and breathe our last breath, we will only take our character with us. If we died holding tightly to Christ, we will be raised in the resurrection to live with Him forever.

**6 - Departing and being with Christ**—Here is the Bible passage:

"For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire

to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better."—*Philippians 1:23*.

Paul did not say in this text that he would go to be with Christ when he died. He undoubtedly was using the word "depart" in reference to his death. But the Bible clearly reveals that **Paul did not believe his "departure" would mean immediate entrance into heaven.** Here is the proof:

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of My departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished My course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which **the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.**"—*2 Timothy 4:6-8*.

Since he obviously did not expect to get his eternal crown at his departure in death, **when did Paul anticipate actually being with Christ?** Here is the answer:

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."—*1 Thessalonians 4:16-18*.

#### **MY COMMITMENT**

This life is so brief, yet so many are unprepared when they pass away. Father in heaven, help me to do what I can to point them to Jesus, while there is still opportunity for them to come! For Jesus' sake I ask this. Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—What is the millennium? When does it begin? How long is it? What happens when it ends? This is a very important subject.

# The Millennium

## What Happens During the Millennium

**How long can a man live?** Most are fortunate to make it to 70 or 80. Dr. Edward L. Bortz, president of the American Medical Association in the late 1940s, declared that the human body should be able to survive to the age of 150. Other researchers agree with him.

**But the time is coming when people will live a thousand years—and continue living on after that.**

Let us turn to a passage which describes that time. First, we will quote the entire passage, then, comparing Scripture with Scripture, we will discover its meaning:

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

“And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.”—*Revelation 20:1-9*.

**This is the only place in the Bible where the thousand-year period is specifically named**, and it is here mentioned six times. The word *millennium* is not found in the Bible. It comes from two Latin words, *mille*, meaning “a thousand,” and *annum*, meaning “a year.” Thus we have *millennium*,

a thousand years.

Twice in the foregoing brief Bible record of the millennium **we are told that Satan is a deceiver. During the millennium he cannot deceive the nations. At its close, for a short time, he will again deceive men.**

He works today with great diligence, knowing that his time is limited before Christ returns for His people, and the millennium begins.

“Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”—*Revelation 12:12*.

The Apostle Paul declares that **“there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust”** (*Acts 24:15*).

**One of these resurrections will take place at the beginning of the one thousand years; the other, at the end.** These two resurrections will be one thousand years apart.

### EVENTS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MILLENNIUM

**At the beginning of the millennium comes the resurrection of the righteous, which is called the first resurrection.**

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”—*Revelation 20:6*.

What then happens to the wicked dead, those who went into Christless graves, at that time? The answer is brief and plain:

“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”—*Revelation 20:5*.

**So the wicked dead (the “rest of the dead”) will not live again until the end of the thousand years.**

Now that we know that the righteous dead are raised to life at the beginning of the one thousand years, *if we can learn what other events occur when God’s faithful ones are raised from the dead,—we know that these also will be at the beginning of the millennium.*

**The primary event that marks the beginning of the millennium is the Second Coming of Christ.**

We know that from the following passage:

“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.”—*1 Thessalonians 4:16*.

What else happens at that time? The next verse tells us.

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet

the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”—*1 Thessalonians 4:17*.

But there is more that happens then.

“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”—*Philippians 3:20-21*.

**What a glorious promise! So the bodies of both the righteous living and the righteous dead will be changed, glorified, and made immortal when Jesus returns the second time!**

“Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

“So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”—*1 Corinthians 15:51-54*.

This all occurs at the Second Advent, which is at the beginning of the millennium.

What happens next? Both the living righteous and those just raised from the dead “are caught up together . . . in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (*1 Thessalonians 4:17*).

**Notice that the feet of Jesus does not touch the earth at His Second Advent.** This fact is important, for it helps us now be able to identify “false christs” who claim to be Christ, returned to the earth.

The above verse says that, after meeting Christ in the air, we will “ever be with the Lord.” Another wonderful promise! Those who have learned to love Jesus deeply while on earth will rejoice that, when He returns for them, they can be with Him forever.

But what does this verse mean?

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.”—*1 Thessalonians 4:15*.

When the King James Version was translated, the word “prevent” meant “not go before.” In other words, the living righteous will not go to heaven ahead of, prior to, God’s faithful ones who have died and are in the grave.

Contrariwise, we are told that the righteous dead will not go to heaven before those who are alive when Christ returns.

“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God hav-

ing provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”—*Hebrews 11:39-40*.

**So all of God’s faithful ones will go to heaven at the same time!** Yet another good promise! Jesus has wonderful things planned for those who, here on earth, have proved loyal to Him in spite of the difficulties and opposition they have encountered.

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”—*John 14:1-3*.

But there is more that happens when Christ returns the second time. **We are told that the wicked who are still alive will die “with the brightness of His coming”** (*2 Thessalonians 2:8*).

“And as it was in the days of Noe, . . . the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot, . . . it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.”—*Luke 17:26-30*.

The unrepentant wicked who are alive when Christ comes in the clouds of heaven will be consumed by the very glory of His coming. “The Lord thy God is a consuming fire” (*Deuteronomy 4:24*).

**There is another important event which occurs at Christ’s return, at the beginning of the millennium. Satan is bound** “that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season” (*Revelation 20:3*).

This is done in a very simple, effective way: The wicked will all be dead. The righteous will all be gone to heaven. There will be no human being on earth to deceive and tantalize. **Satan is bound by this chain of events at the beginning of the millennium.** Until some kind of change later occurs on earth, he cannot work at his trade of controlling human minds.

#### EVENTS DURING THE MILLENNIUM

**There are four things to keep in mind about this lengthy, thousand-year period:**

**First, the earth is desolate.** It is likened to a “bottomless pit” (*Revelation 20:3*). The original Greek for this phrase means “abyss.” In the Septuagint Greek Version of the Old Testament, this Greek word is translated “without form and void” (*Jeremiah 4:23*). The rest of the passage is also describing the millennium.

“I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled,

and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by His fierce anger.”—*Jeremiah 4:23-26*.

**Second, the wicked are dead.** In the verses just quoted, Jeremiah says “there was no man.”

**Third, Satan is bound in this bottomless pit.** On this desolated earth there is no one to deceive. Without having anyone to tempt, he will have a thousand years to think about all the havoc, grief, suffering, and death he has caused.

Having earlier read Revelation 20, Satan will know what is to happen at the close of the thousand years—so he will have time to plan what he will do then: a final assault against God and His faithful ones, in a last, desperate attempt to destroy them.

**Fourth, the righteous are engaged in a work of judgment in heaven.** John describes it:

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.”—*Revelation 20:4*.

Paul provides us with still more information:

“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?”—*1 Corinthians 6:2-3*.

During this period, the redeemed have an opportunity to see how difficult it was for God to try and save those who, choosing to remain in their sins, refused to be saved. When sin and sinners are totally gone, we will say, “True and righteous are Thy judgments.” Because there will then be no room for doubts as to why some will not be saved, “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

#### EVENTS AT THE END OF THE MILLENNIUM

**There are seven events which occur at the close of the millennium.**

**1 - The wicked dead are resurrected.** The mighty host of all those who have ever lived on our planet, who were not saved, are raised from the dead and stand upon the earth once more.

“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”—*Revelation 20:5*.

**2 - Satan is “loosed out of his prison”** (*verse 7*). The raising of the wicked dead from their graves gives him opportunity to deceive once more.

**3 - Satan “shall go out to deceive the nations”** (*verse 8*). How can he deceive them when they are already lost? As usual, the devil has a scheme in mind.

**4 - The Holy City, New Jerusalem, descends from heaven** (*Revelation 21:2*). That this takes place in close connection with the loosing of Satan

is obvious from what follows.

**5 - Satan marshals the vast host of the wicked, and they surround the holy city. At that time occurs the final judgment.**

“And shall go out to deceive the nations . . . to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city.”—*Revelation 20:8-9*.

Rejoicing that the wicked are once again alive, Satan goes among them, and convinces them that they are well able to conquer the city and gain control of its riches. We would expect that extensive preparations are made at that time for the oncoming attack.

And all the while the righteous inside the Holy City see that all those outside the city—including their former loved ones—are *devising ways to kill God’s faithful ones in the Holy City!*

**When the wicked, under Satan’s generalship, surround the holy city, then the final judgment against them is executed.** This is referred to, in a dramatic way, in Revelation 20:11-13:

“And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.”—*Revelation 20:11-13*.

**6 - “Fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them”** (*verse 9*). Fire will descend from heaven and devour unnumbered billions of rebellious, unrepentant sinners. “Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord” (*2 Thessalonians 1:9*); that is, *with a destruction which lasts forever*. The wicked come to a total end.

“For as ye have drunk upon My holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been.”—*Obadiah 16*.

“For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”—*Psalms 37:10-11*.

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it

shall leave them neither root nor branch

“But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.”—*Malachi 4:1-2*.

**Nothing shall remain of the wicked**, but, as it were, a few “ashes” on the ground, which quickly disappear.

“And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.”—*Malachi 4:3*.

**As for the devil and his angels, they will also die in that fire. Sin and sinners will then be totally gone—forever!**

“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire . . . and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them . . . And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”—*Revelation 20:10, 13-15*.

**7 - Then the righteous will inherit the new earth.**

**Sin and sinners will then be totally gone—forever!** The entire universe will be pure, clean, and good for all eternity. “There shall be no more curse” (*Revelation 22:3*).

“He God will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time.”—*Nahum 1:9*.

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”—*Revelation 21:4*.

**You and I have no idea of the glories that await us in the earth made new!** Oh, my friend, we must cling to Jesus, obey His Word, and be faithful to the end! He has a wonderful future in store for us. *You and I must be there!*

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.”—*1 Corinthians 2:9*.

“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.”—*Matthew 5:5*.

“Wait on the Lord, and keep His way, and He shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.”—*Psalms 37:34*.

“And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever.”—*Revelation 22:3-5*.

“And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.”—*Daniel 7:27*.

The sin problem has been a difficult one. The entire universe has watched to see how it would work out. But, as we have learned in this chapter, God is going to end it in such a satisfactory way that there will be no more questions, so sin will never arise a second time.

#### MY COMMITMENT

Father in heaven, help me to share this important truth with others, so they will feel the urgency of the hour, and want to come to Thee while there is still time. In Jesus's name I ask it. Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—One of the most sinister dangers of our time! And one that is rapidly increasing! For your own protection, this is a topic you need to understand.

# The Danger of Spiritualism

*The Deceptive Lure of the Spirit World*

**Spiritualism, also called spiritism, is a belief in communication with departed spirits of loved ones.** We have already learned that belief in the immortality of the soul began with the Egyptians. Spiritualism also began there. **If it is believed that people live on after death, then it is logical to imagine that we can talk to them.**

“Ancestor-worship, in most cases is simply the Spiritualism of the East, and survives today through a belief in human immortality.”—*Dr. James H. Hyslop, Contact with the Other World, p. 14.*

Humans do not go to another world, but to the silence of the grave at death. Therefore, **those who think they are in contact with “departed spirits” are really receiving messages that are not from men and women but from demons—Satan’s fallen angels.**

## MEN WHO HAVE TALKED WITH DEMONS

**Some of the most evil men in history have been in communication with demons.** Here are four of the more recent ones: Each one greatly affected modern history for the worse:

**Charles Darwin** (1809-1882) was the first of the four. During his nearly five-year expedition on the ship, *HMS Beagle* (December 27, 1831-October 2, 1836), he spent most of his time exploring on land (mostly in South America) with native guides and camping with them;—three years and three months on land, compared with only 18 months at sea. Very curious about everything around him, young Darwin wanted to learn about everything he saw. **During this time, he was initiated by natives into witchcraft ceremonies.**

One Argentine trip with native Argentinians across the pampas began on August 13, 1833; another (a 400-mile trip) inland near the Uruguay River, was made after that. On April 19, 1834, he set out in boats up the river Rio Santa Cruz, also in Argentina.

At Valparaiso, Chile, Darwin bought horses and set off into the high country for an extensive trip. Back in Valparaiso, he set out on another trek up toward the Andes, and reached the continental divide on March 21.

Darwin’s theories, turning men and women from belief in God and the Bible, have destroyed the faith of millions.

**Kaiser Wilhelm** (1797-1888) of Germany, a prime-mover in starting World War I, **consulted the famous German medium Augusta Schoen as well as others.** The spirits told him to start the war which, although it would cost the lives of millions, would enable him to conquer all of Europe.

**Josef Stalin** (1878-1953) **is believed to have also been in contact with spiritualist mediums,** which told him how to govern the Russian people. Satan delights in bringing misery to people and causing their death. In the 1930s, Stalin initiated a purge of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which has become known as the *Great Purge*, an unprecedented campaign of political repression, persecution and executions that reached its peak in 1937. Confiscations of grain and other food by the Soviet authorities under his orders contributed to a famine between 1932 and 1934, especially in the key agricultural regions of the Soviet Union, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and North Caucasus that resulted in millions of deaths.

**Adolf Hitler** (1889-1945) **consulted a spirit which would visit him alone each evening in his bedroom,** which was separate from the room in which Eva Braun stayed. Taking visible form, it would tell him that if he would militarize Germany and begin invading other nations, he would soon be in possession, not only of Europe but also Britain, Russia, and North Africa. Millions died because Hitler listened to demons.

Many **rock stars** have, by their own statements, made contact with demons. They have found that this enables them to have more control over their audiences and make them wild.

Jesus said, “By their fruits ye shall know them (*Matthew 7:20*). Demon control by the spirits of spiritualism is the fruit of the error that men do not die when they die.

## THE BIBLE CONDEMNS SPIRITUALISM

**The Bible condemns spiritualism for three reasons:**

**First, because it is not true that we can communicate with those who have died.** Men and women who die go to the grave; they do not live on in another afterlife.

“For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished.”—*Ecclesiastes 9:5-6.*

“His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.”—*Psalms 146:4.*

There is a total cessation of thought at death.

Sight, hearing, mental activity, and speaking all end at the grave.

"As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him anymore."—*Job 7:9-10*.

Although a sincere Christian who has died "will no more return to his house" in this present world, yet when Christ returns and calls him from the grave, he will be with Jesus forevermore (*1 Thessalonians 4:15-18*). What a glorious promise!

But, contradicting the clear statements of Scripture, spiritualism claims that we who are alive can communicate with those who have died, and learn wonderful truths from them.

**The second reason why the Bible is against spiritualism is that Satan, the archenemy of God, claims that death is not real.** To Eve, mother of all, he spoke the first lie—and it laid the foundation for spiritualism.

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."—*Genesis 3:4-5*.

Satan's message is all there! (1) You will not die if you disobey God, but be immortal and live forever. (2) You will obtain marvelous knowledge if you will sin against God.

Satan's lie about death led the human race into sin and misery. God is against Satan, who is "a liar, and the father of it" (*John 8:44*).

**The third reason why the Bible opposes spiritualism is because it turns people from the Bible, from God, and destroys their lives.**

The spirits tell people that everyone will be saved, and the most wicked people are in a higher state of heavenly existence than the most godly Christians who have died. **Everything that comes from this satanic source is designed to produce atheism, misery, and death.**

Dr. L.S. Forbes Winslow, an expert on mental illness, wrote:

"I could quote many instances where **men of the highest ability have followed the doctrines of spiritualism, only to end their day ruined.**"—*Spiritualistic Madness*, p. 29.

J. Godfrey Raupert, another expert on spiritualism, stated:

**"They drive men and women to destruction and to the madhouse. They undermine religious faith and confidence** and, in a thousand instances, bring about an utter weariness and detestation of the duties of the present life . . . I have, during the last ten years, spent much of my time in answer-

ing the inquiries of persons whose lives have been shipwrecked by spiritistic practices, and it is upon painful facts and incontrovertible evidence that I base my conclusions."

## WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

**God commanded His people in Bible times to have nothing to do with witchcraft and spiritistic mediums.**

"When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, **thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.** There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. **For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord:** and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God."—*Deuteronomy 18:9-13*.

The most sweeping condemnation is given in the above passage to astrology, fortune-telling, charms, spiritist mediums ("consulters of familiar spirits"), and other methods of making contact with supernatural beings.

**This warning is also given in the New Testament:**

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron."—*1 Timothy 4:1-2*.

**These are urgent words of warning, and tell us that spiritist manifestations will increase as we approach the end of time, just before Christ returns.**

Repeatedly, the Bible has warned us to have nothing to do with all forms of spiritualism!

"Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God."—*Leviticus 19:31*.

"And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers."—*Malachi 3:5*.

"Therefore hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters . . . **For they prophesy a lie unto you,** to remove you far from your land; and that I should drive you out, and ye should perish."—*Jeremiah 27:9-10*.

In Old Testament times, God commanded that witches and wizards should be killed. "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (*Exodus 22:18*).

"A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death."—

*Leviticus 20:27.*

### **SOMETHING TO BE AVOIDED**

Because the dead are unconscious, they cannot make intelligent contact with anyone. **The purported communications from the dead are fakery. They are the fakery of the medium or fakery performed by the “spirits of devils” masquerading as people who have died.**

“I frankly admit that there is not only triviality and contradiction but fraud and trickery in the psychic field.”—*Sherwood Eddy, You Will Survive After Death.*

Please do not be confused! **God’s message for this critical hour in history is simply not found in the trivial disclosures of sometimes truthful and sometimes lying spirits.** Saving truth is found in the Bible,—not in the “profound” information that two sisters had a ring, or in the materialization of an ash tray, or the medium being able to see a table fork when someone in the audience thinks about one.

**Satan and his “seducing spirits” who were “cast out into the earth” possess information known only to the dead loved ones and their relatives or friends.** When men and women dare to consult mediums, or spiritistic devices such as ouija boards, they are lured on and on to their ruin. **Evil angels even appear in the form of a deceased loved one.**

An intelligent lady was studying the Bible on this subject. She had been very much interested in communication with the dead. But when she came to this particular point in her study, she exclaimed, “*Then who is writing on my slate?*”

Yes, who is it that gives the messages in the darkened room? Who is masquerading in the disguise of those loved ones who died? What are the powers that are unquestionably operating in the psychic world? It is Satan and his evil angels.

**“For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles.”—Revelation 16:14.**

With their superior intelligence, **Satan and his angels can appear to work miracles**, which will deceive all who are not grounded in a knowledge of the Bible.

“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”—*2 Corinthians 11:13-14.*

**One of the newest forms of ancient paganism which has entered the West in recent decades is Yoga.** Both Hinduism and Buddhism use it to make contact with “master spirits.” **Beware of the Eastern religions!**

We have come to a time when we cannot always trust our eyes, ears, and feelings. We must found

all our beliefs on the Written Word of God. We must study and obey what the Bible says.

**Remember that “the dead know not anything.” Our only safety is to flee from such things—and plead with Christ for help! Thank God, He is more powerful than the devil and all his demons!**

It is easy to be deceived, or to deceive ourselves. “Take heed that no man deceive you (*Matthew 24:4*). “Let no man deceive himself” (*1 Corinthians 3:18*). “Satan, which deceiveth the whole world” (*Revelation 12:9*), wants everyone to believe that it is all right to ignore the Bible, disobey God’s Ten Commandments, and refuse to accept Christ as one’s Saviour.

**Although there is trickery and showmanship by the mediums, witches, and psychics,—there is also satanic involvement.** Have nothing to do with such things, not even horoscopes and astrology.

“Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: **behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.**”—*Matthew 24:26.*

Millions of dollars are spent each year on fortunetellers of one kind or another. “Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?” *Isaiah 55:2*).

**We should not read witchcraft novels, such as the Harry Potter books!** Their author has filled them with instruction from her large collection of spiritist books written for witches. Here are several quotations from the present author’s book, *The Demons of Witchcraft*:

**“She [J.K. Rowling] has an extremely well-developed and sophisticated knowledge of the occult world**, its legends, history and nuances.”—*Richard Abanes, Harry Potter and the Bible, p. 24.*

**“There is a general nastiness underneath the mantle of cuteness.** The kids lie, they steal, they take revenge. This is a disturbing moral world, and it conflicts with what I am trying to teach my children.”—*Ken McCormick, quoted in Baptist Press, July 13, 2000.*

“The ordinary person is typified as being bad because they have no [magic] powers, and heroes are the people who are using the occult. **This is an inversion of morality.**”—*Robert Frisken of Christian Community Schools in Australia, quoted in Sydney Morning Herald, March 27, 2001.*

“Out of the shadows, a hooded figure came crawling across the ground like some stalking beast . . . The cloaked figure reached the unicorn, lowered its head over the wound in the animal’s side, and began to drink its blood.”—*Sorcerer’s Stone, p. 256.*

“Where there should have been a back to Quirrell’s head, there was a face, the most terrible face Harry had ever seen. It was chalk white with glaring eyes and slits for nostrils, like a snake . . . ‘See what I have become?’ the face said. ‘Mere shadow and

vapor . . . Once I have the elixir of Life, I will be able to create a body of my own.' ”—*Sorcerer's Stone*, pp. 293-294.

**“Harry Potter gives children an appetite for the occult.”**—Robert Knight, *Family Research Council*, in *Tulsa World*, June 20, 2000.

**Here is an outstanding passage of Scripture which is a safe guide for any willing to follow it:**

“And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: **should not a people seek unto their God?** [instead of] for the living to the dead?

**“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.”**—*Isaiah 8:20*.

**One day a small boy**, from a non-Christian home, was curious to learn what it was like inside a church. So he began going to one. His mother had a morbid fear of death. After listening to the story of the resurrection of Christ, the child ran home with a shining face and exclaimed, “Oh, Mother! you need not be afraid to die anymore, for Jesus went through the grave and, when He came out, *He left a light behind!* —For He has risen from the dead!”

Yes, one of the comforting truths in all of God's Book is that **a person rests quietly, undisturbed by memories of a troubled life or by concern for his loved ones, until the promised resurrection day.**

Notice how consistent God's plan is. **Why would we need a resurrection at the end of time if men go to their reward immediately at death?** Why would Jesus need to return to this earth a second time, as He has promised, to gather His people,—if they are already with Him now in Paradise? Why do the Scriptures teach a judgment in the last days if men are already judged at death?

The dead do not return to their house. Their power to think ceases. **They know nothing until Jesus calls them forth at the resurrection.**

#### **SAUL AND THE WITCH OF ENDOR**

**It is altogether possible for a fallen angel to masquerade as another being**, to actually appear to be the form of a loved one. This helps explain what happened when **King Saul dared to visit a witch in a cave in the region of Endor**. The story of what happened is told in 1 Samuel 28. Notice verses 6 and 7:

“And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.”—1 Samuel 28:6-7.

**Although Saul knew that witches were representatives of Satan, he went to visit one**—so he could receive counsel from Samuel who had died.

“And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee . . . Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.”—1 Samuel 28:8, 11.

Why did the witch say, “Whom shall I bring up?” **If Samuel went to heaven when he died, why would not the medium call him down from heaven**—instead of up from down below, as she did?

This medium said she saw several beings arriving: **“I saw gods ascending out of the earth.”** Verse 13. She saw evil spirits entering the cave. First she said she saw several, and then said she only saw one. When Saul asked, “What form is he of?” she said, “An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle” (verse 14). Saul accepted that as Samuel.

**But how could Saul speak to Samuel, when “the dead know not anything”?** Samuel was in the grave. However, **because Saul dared to visit a witch's den, Satan had direct access to the king and could affect his mind with what he thought he was seeing!**

It was only an evil demon playing the part of Samuel in psychic drama forbidden by God!

**Satan is able to predict some things correctly.** He knew that the king, who would get almost no sleep that night, would be so distraught with a message that he would die the next day in battle—that it would be a self-fulfilling prophecy. —Especially so, since the Lord had now fully left him!

And so the prediction came true. **Because Saul dared to do this, he died the next day.** We are told that **part of the reason he died was because he consulted a spirit medium.**

“So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it.”—1 Chronicles 10:13.

Some who read this incident in the Bible imagine that Samuel actually spoke to Saul. But, *first*, “the dead know not anything.” And *second*, **if Samuel were actually in heaven—would God permit him to go at the call of a witch to talk to Saul?**

God writes over the seance, over every attempt to contact the dead, “Evil and deadly!” The same satanic powers that operated back then are working today.

A well-known spiritualist medium wrote this:

“The phenomenal aspect of modern spiritual-

ism reproduces all of the essential principles of the magic witchcraft and sorcery of the past. The same powers are involved, the same intelligences operating.”—*F.F. Morse, Practical occultism, p. 85.*

“**The road to Endor** is the oldest road  
And the craziest road of all;  
**Straight it runs to the witch's abode**  
As it did in the days of Saul.  
**And nothing has changed of the sorrow in store**  
For those that go down on the road to Endor.”

—*Rudyard Kipling*

Commenting on that poem, Jane T. Stoddard, in her book, *The Case against Spiritualism*, wrote, “**That old road has never been more crowded than it is today.**”

#### **SPIRITUALISM IN THE LAST DAYS**

**Scripture declares that there will be a dramatic increase in the popularity of witchcraft as we near the end of the world.**

As of January 2008, 180 million copies of **the Harry Potter books**, alone, have been printed. You will find them in over 45 languages, in 135 countries. The worldwide gross dollars for the Harry Potter films is \$3.8 billion. Over 1.5 million audio versions have been sold. The author, J.K. Rowling, is now the richest woman in Britain, and the first billionaire in history who obtained it by writing books.

Yet such books portray hate, violence, murder, and crimes of the most grotesque and sordid type.

**Satan is planning for a “satanic spectacular” in these last days.**

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.”—*1 Timothy 4:1.*

**He will do wonders, even appearing as “an angel of light.”**

“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”—*2 Corinthians 11:14.*

**His agents will pretend to be very righteous and holy.**

“Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness.”—*2 Corinthians 11:15.*

**Satan and his agents will even attempt to counterfeit the coming of Christ, and work signs and wonders to confirm their boastful claims.**

“Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”—*Matthew 24:23-24.*

**Satan will make it appear that fire is coming down from heaven.**

“And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do.”—*Revelation 13:13-14.*

**Satan will work with special power and deceptive wonders just prior to Christ's Second Coming.**

“Whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.”—*2 Thessalonians 2:9.*

Even though many will be deceived by these wonders, and accept the false christs that appear, **Christ's faithful ones know the Bible teaching that Christ will not touch the earth when He comes to take His redeemed to heaven.**

“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”—*1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.*

**We must cling to Jesus, study His Word, and by His enabling grace obey what we read.**

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”—*1 Peter 5:8.*

#### **ONLY WITH JESUS ARE WE SAFE**

**The spiritualists hate the Bible, Christ, God, and the plan of salvation.** Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who spent his life writing mystery novels to preoccupy minds with crime, also went deeply into spiritualism. He wrote, “Spiritualism will sweep the world and make it a better place in which to live. When it rules the world, it will banish the blood of Christ.”

But those in the world who do not have Christ are desolate and lonely. **There is no help or comfort to be found in worldly entertainment, reading Harry Potter books, or attending seances.** Only in Jesus can we find the peace of heart for which we so much long.

**A little cottage in the West caught fire.** In a few seconds the thatched roof and wooden timbers were ablaze. The villagers stood around helpless.

Suddenly, a young man who had recently arrived in the area, ran up—and into the burning house. **Soon he emerged through the smoke, bearing under each arm a little child.** They were unhurt, for Andy had hidden them under his coat. But he was terribly burned.

Scarcely had he got out before the roof of the cottage fell in with a sickening crash. The parents were never seen alive again.

A kind old woman took Andy into her home and nursed him carefully. Meanwhile, there was much discussion in the village as to what was to become of the two rescued children. **A council meeting was called, and two claimed the little ones.** One was the squire of the village. He had money, position, and a home to offer the children.

The other was Andy! **When asked what right he had to the little ones, he said “I was willing to die for them,” and held up his hands**—burned and scarred on their account. Everyone agreed that Andy should have the children.

**The Lord Jesus Christ, our divine Intercessor, holds up His hands before the Father—and claims you and me as His own. Will we accept Him? He is waiting.**

“I know not how Calvary’s cross, A world from sin could free. I only know its matchless love, Has brought God’s love to me.”

#### **MY COMMITMENT**

Kind Father in heaven, send Thine guardian angels to protect me from spiritualism. Show me how to warn my loved ones, so none of them will dabble in this terrible menace. In Jesus’s name I present this request. Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—Most people do not realize that there is a prophetic sequence presented to us in the book of Daniel—which predicts events down to our own time and beyond. In Daniel 7, we will learn important facts which we need to know, in order to make important decisions today.

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— PART FOUR —

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CHRIST IN THE SANCTUARY

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A Complete Evangelistic Sermon: Chapter Fifteen

# The Prophecy of Daniel Seven

Christ's Coming World Dominion

**Two travelers, journeying through the Midwest, stopped one evening at a cabin.** The family let them have a bedroom to sleep in for the night. But, as they crawled into bed, both men were fearful. They had some gold with them, and they feared the family might kill them during the night for it.

**As they lay there, they heard murmuring from the other room,** and then the scraping of chairs. Almost paralyzed with fear, one man crept to the door and peeked through the large keyhole.

**Soon he returned, spoke a few words to his companion, and both went soundly to sleep.**

What had made the change? Looking through the keyhole, he had seen the family, which had gathered at the table reading the Bible, had pushed back their chairs and were now kneeling in earnest prayer.

**The two travelers had stopped for the night at a Christian home, where the Bible and prayer were important.**

Is the Bible and prayer important in your home each day? There are astounding treasures to be found in God's Book.

In this study we will view several, amazing jewels from this treasure chest—given to us by the God of heaven. They are found in the seventh chapter of the book of Daniel—right in your Bible.

**God knows the future, “declaring the end from the beginning”** (Isaiah 46:10). And “He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7).

“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; **I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done.** saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.”—*Isaiah 46:9-10.*

A few days before His death, **Jesus urged the importance of reading and understanding the prophecy of Daniel** (Matthew 24:15-16). He considered it a very important book.

**Fulfilled prophecy is a proof of the true and**

**living God and of the inspiration of His Holy Word.** God foresees what will happen in the future, and He proves it by revealing coming events in divine prophecy.

**Daniel was but a youth when God gave him the vision of the future as symbolized by the great image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2—a prophecy which we earlier studied in this book.**

**In the seventh chapter, Daniel was given another most important vision.** He was now an old man, certainly past eighty years of age. The nation of Babylon had also grown old and weak, and was soon to be conquered by the Medo-Persians.

**While Daniel 2 revealed the history of the world under the symbol of a great metal image, in Daniel 7 the symbolism of ravenous beasts is used.**

The last beast, representing a power which would persecute the saints of God, was so unusual in its appearance that no name could fitly describe it.

**Let us remember that this prophecy was given nearly 600 years before Christ, or about 2,500 years ago; it outlines the history of the world, and today we can read of its fulfillment in our history books.**

“Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.”—*Daniel 7:2.*

In symbolic Bible language, the “**four winds**” signify strife. Here is an example:

“And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and will scatter them toward all those winds; and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts of Elam shall not come. For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies, . . . and I will send the sword after them, till I have consumed them.”—*Jeremiah 49:36-37.*

These four winds from the four points of the compass must represent political activity, confusion, and war. These beasts of prophecy arise as a result of war and conquest.

The “**great sea**” must represent the masses and multitudes of the nations of the world, the great sea of humanity in all ages, as we read in Revelation:

“The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.”—*Revelation 17:15.*

As Daniel was watching the great sea being lashed into fury by cyclonic winds, “four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another” (*Daniel 7:3*).

**So, as a result of strife among the peoples of earth, these great beasts arise.** What do they represent? We are told that **these four beasts stand**

**for four kingdoms**, rather than individual kings.

"The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth."—*Daniel 7:23*.

As Daniel was looking at this prophecy, he was encouraged with the next words:

"But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever."—*Daniel 7:18*.

#### THE FIRST THREE KINGDOMS

It is therefore plain that **the history of the world, from Babylon to the setting up of God's everlasting kingdom, is again presented in Daniel 7 as it was in Daniel 2**. There were to be but four major kingdoms. In both chapters they follow one another, and God's kingdom comes as the glorious climax!

"And the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom."—*Daniel 7:22*.

"And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom."—*Daniel 7:27*.

**The four beasts represent the same four world powers, beginning with Babylon**, as did the four parts of the image in the second chapter. Just as gold is properly called the chief of metals, so this first beast was "like a lion" (*verse 4*). The lion is the chief or king of beasts. And it "had eagle's wings" (*verse 4*). The eagle is the king of the air. The eagle-winged lion, representing Babylon, invaded nation after nation. Significantly, the winged lion is found throughout Babylonian works of art. It was even stamped on the side of every brick throughout the city of Babylon!

But notice, a change comes. Daniel says:

"I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it."—*Daniel 7:4*.

Mighty Babylon became weak as a man. Its lion-like power and wings of speed were taken away; and, on a night of women and wine, feasting and reveling (*Daniel 5*), it was ready to fall before the attacks of the next great beast, the **Medo-Persia Empire**.

"And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh."—*Daniel 7:5*.

**This was the second world kingdom, Medo-Persia, which overthrew Babylon** in 538 B.C. As silver is inferior to gold, so in some respects the bear was inferior to the lion.

Notice that this bear raised itself first on one

side. It was a dual monarchy of Medes and Persians. One power was stronger than the other, arose first, conquered the other, and then united the kingdom into Medo-Persia.

It was a cruel and bloodthirsty power. The three ribs represented the triple alliance of Babylon, Libya, and Egypt, which the bear fought against and conquered.

**But Medo-Persia ran its course and came to its end at the great Battle of Arbela in 331 B.C.—conquered by the third beast.**

"After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it."—*Daniel 7:6*.

The leopard is noted for its swiftness and fierceness. This one, with four heads and four wings, was the **Grecian Empire**. The extra wings typified the extreme speed of the invasions of Alexander the Great, with his Greek and Macedonian armies traveling from European Greece across Asia Minor, Palestine, Egypt, through the Persian Empire—and into the heart of India. In just five years Alexander had marched his soldiers over 5,100 miles. **He had finished conquering the world's greatest empires when he was only 25 years of age.**

In 323 B.C. Alexander made his capital at the city of Babylon, and there he died.

"The beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it."—*Verse 6*.

**The four heads stand for the four divisions of the empire, made after Alexander's death.** (His death occurred after several days of drinking himself drunk, because he had sunk into a depression after having earlier slain his best friend in a drunken rage.) His empire was soon divided among his four leading generals. **Cassander** took the western portion (Macedonia and Greece); **Lysimachus**, the northern (Thrace and a large part of Asia Minor); **Seleucus**, the eastern (the bulk of what once was the Persian Empire); and **Ptolemy**, the southern (Egypt, Palestine, and part of Syria).

This fourfold dominion followed the Battle of Ipsus in 301 B.C., when these four leading generals defeated the last attempt to hold the empire of Alexander together. **This Grecian Empire is also symbolized by the brass kingdom of Daniel 2.**

#### THE FOURTH KINGDOM

**The prophecy next moves on rapidly to the fourth world kingdom.**

"After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: **and it was diverse from all the beasts**

that were before it; and it had ten horns.

"I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them **another little horn**, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, **behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.**"—*Daniel 7:7-8.*

This beast with a dreadful appearance represented the **Roman Empire, with its final ten divisions.** This beast is described but not named by Daniel. For this reason, it is usually called the **"nondescript beast."** Its great iron teeth speak of its destructiveness and cruelty. Historians often call it the "iron kingdom,"

The ten horns are spoken of in these words:

"And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise."—*Verse 24.*

The ten horns represent ten kings. The king stands for a kingdom (*verses 17, 23*). So **ten main kingdoms were to arise out of Rome's empire. The modern nations of Europe are the outgrowth of these divisions.** We earlier learned in the chapter on Daniel 2, that **they can never be permanently united** by men. **The nations of Europe will always remain separate.**

"And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: **but they shall not cleave one to another**, even as iron is not mixed with clay."—*Daniel 2:43.*

**The prophet's attention was especially fixed on this fourth, strange beast,** which ultimately was so different than the ones before it.

"**Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast,** which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet."—*Daniel 7:19.*

**History clearly shows that the world power succeeding the four-part Grecian Empire was Rome,** the great empire that stretched from the Atlantic to the parts of Asia. Here in 168 B.C., at the Battle of Pydna, the last real opposition of Alexander's descendants was broken. Rome began to annex various nations of the old Greek Empire, including Palestine.

*But how did the ten horns arise?*

**Rome itself was finally broken up by the invasions of barbarian tribes from the north,** the chief among them being **the Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Franks, Vandals, Suevi, Alamanni, Anglo-Saxons, Heruli, Lombards, and Burgundians.** This disruption of the great empire into ten divisions took place between A.D. 351 and A.D. 476, approximately.

#### THE LITTLE HORN

**Daniel was particularly interested in this**

**beast's horns, and for a special reason: a "little horn" which arose, which was arrogant, blasphemous, and killed the people of God! Read this:**

"And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of **that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things,** whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and **the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;**

"Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom."—*Daniel 7:20-22.*

Daniel was astonished that a "little horn" power came out of this fourth beast—which would repeatedly persecute and slay God's people!

But, just as occurred with the fourth part of the great metal image of Daniel 2,—**the time of the ten horns and little horn of Daniel 7 is followed by Christ's Second Coming for His people!**

**Daniel saw that this little horn rose up among them after the ten horns had initially gained power,—and was very different.**

**Although small at first, it grew to be very great; in fact, "more stout than his fellows."** In the process of rising to power, **through its influence, three of the first ten horns (the Heruli, Vandals, and Ostrogoths), were uprooted.** The last of these (the Ostrogoths) were conquered in A.D. 538.

**Here is how these three powers were eliminated:** The first, the **Heruli**, were German troops who had mutinied. In 476 they invaded Rome, deposed the boy emperor Romulus Augustus, the last emperor of the West. Odoacer, their leader, made himself king in Rome. Through the influence of Emperor Zeno in Constantinople, the Ostrogoths invaded Italy and destroyed the Heruli.

At the request of the papacy, Justinian, the new emperor of the East, soon sent his armies under General Belisarius to destroy both the Vandals and Ostrogoths. In 534, he overthrew the **Vandals**, and then marched against the **Ostrogoths** in Rome, conquering them in A.D. 538. Thus the three horns were uprooted by the influence of the papacy, and the way was cleared for its full development.

"I might cite three that were eradicated from before the pope out of the list first given: *viz*, the Heruli under Odoacer, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths."—*Horae Apocalypticae*, Vol. 3, p. 168, Note 1 (London: 1862).

"And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and **another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first** [kings], and he shall subdue three kings."—*Daniel 7:24.*

**This little horn power even dared to speak great words against the Most High.**

“And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.”—*Daniel 7:25*.

**The little horn represents papal Rome, or the papacy.** All students of history know that Rome had two phases: *pagan Rome* and *papal Rome*.

“Out of the ruins of political Rome, arose the great moral Empire in the ‘giant form’ of the Roman Church.”—A.C. Flick, *The Rise of the Mediaeval Church*, p. 150.

**When pagan Rome fell under the invasion of the barbarian tribes, the Bishop of Rome picked up the scepter.** Christianity was nominally accepted by the barbarians in general, and **the pope became the chief power in Europe.**

Emperor Justinian, living far off in the east in Constantinople, had issued a decree in A.D. 533 that the bishop of Rome was “the head of all the holy churches . . . and priests” and “corrector of heretics.” The pope would have both religious and civil authority to carry out those mandates.

**This imperial edict did not become effective until 538, when the last of the three horns were uprooted. So the supremacy of the papacy began in that year: A.D. 538,** when this decree actually went into effect. Then the papacy acquired territorial rule and dominance.

The papacy is the government of the *papa*, the pope. **For more than 1,200 years the threads of European history have been interwoven with those of the papacy.**

“Long ages ago, when Rome through the neglect of the Western emperors was left to the mercy of the barbarous hordes, the Romans turned to one figure for aid and protection, and asked him to rule them; and thus . . . commenced the temporal sovereignty of the popes. And stepping to the throne of Caesar, the vicar of Christ took up the scepter to which the emperors and kings of Europe were to bow in reverence through so many ages.”—James H. Conroy, *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, April 1911.

**All historians, both Catholic and Protestant, know that, following the breakup of pagan Rome, the papacy, papal Rome, became the outstanding force among the ten kingdoms of Europe.** There simply is no other power which answers to the following ten points set forth by Daniel concerning the little horn.

#### TEN IDENTIFYING FACTS

**Here are ten facts about this little horn power:**

**1 - It came up after the ten horns.** “And another shall arise after them” (*Daniel 7:24*). The little horn was to come up after the ten horns were actively in place. Although in existence earlier, the papacy did not rise to power and prominence until after Rome’s division.

**2 - It came up among the ten horns.** “There came up among them another little horn” (*verse 8*). This power must come up among the ten horns; that is, in the European region. The papacy arose with its seat in the city of Rome.

**3 - It was to uproot three horns.** “Before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots” (*verse 8*). Because the three that were uprooted (the Heruli, Ostrogoths, and Vandals) opposed some of the teachings and claims of the papacy, it used its influence to have them eliminated.

**4 - It was to be different from the other horns.** “And he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings” (*verse 24*). Instead of a normal kingdom, **the papacy was a religio-political power**—a mixture of religion and politics,—which demanded that people either submit to its religious teachings or be slain. **It was also a mixture of Christianity and beliefs, rites, and ceremonies borrowed from paganism.**

Cardinal Newman (1801-1890) described it in this way:

“Confiding then in the power of Christianity to resist the infection of evil, and to transmute the very instruments and appendages of demon-worship to an evangelical use, . . . the rulers of the Church from early times were prepared to adopt, or imitate, or sanction the existing rites and customs of the populace, as well as the philosophy of the educated class.”—Cardinal John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, pp. 371-372.

The papacy believed that, by adopting heathen practices, it would be able to convert more of them into the church.

“The Church took the Pagan philosophy and made it the buckler of faith against the heathen.”—*Catholic World*, March 1895.

“And indeed, all writers who are acquainted with antiquity—be they lay or clerical, Protestant or papal, Italian or foreign—agree as to the pagan origin of Rome’s present usages and ceremonies.”—Mourant Brock, *Rome, Pagan and Papal*, p. 31.

**5 - It was to become a leading power.** “Whose look was more stout than his fellows” (*Daniel 7:20*). **The little horn was to become the power which crowned emperors, princes, and rulers.** They would kiss his feet and hold his saddle stirrup. Cardinal Manning (1808-1892) wrote this:

"The vicar of the incarnate Son of God, **anointed high priest and supreme ruler the pope, sat in his tribunal, impartially to judge between nation and nation**, between people and prince, between sovereign and subject."—*Cardinal Henry Edward Manning, The Temporal Power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ*, p. 46.

**6 - This little horn power was to speak great words against God.** "And he shall speak great words against the Most High" (*Daniel 7:25*). **The pope is given titles which belong only to the Godhead.** The Council of Trent (1545-1563, one of the most important Catholic doctrinal councils) defines the papal power in these words:

"We define that the Holy Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff **holds the primacy over the whole world.**"—*Council of Trent, quoted in Labbe and Cossart, The Most Holy Councils*, Vol. 13, Col. 1167.

Pope Leo XIII (reigned 1878-1903) wrote: **"We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty"** (*Encyclical Letter, dated June 20, 1894*).

"This judicial authority **will even include the power to pardon sins.**"—*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume 12, p. 265.

**Many more statements could be quoted. The papacy is either what it claims to be, or it is the real Antichrist.** Both Catholics and Protestants admit this.

**7 - The little horn was to make war on God's saints.** "And shall wear out the saints of the Most High" (*Daniel 7:25*). **It believed that it was its duty to persecute to the death dissenters who rejected its doctrines and practices.** During the Dark Ages, unnumbered millions died as a result.

Even modern Roman Catholic writers justify this religious persecution and intolerance.

**"The church has persecuted.** Only a tyro [novice] in church history will deny that . . . Protestants were persecuted in France and Spain with the whole approval of the church authorities. We have always defended the persecution of the Huguenots, and the Spanish Inquisition.

"Wherever and whenever there is honest Catholicity, there will be a clear distinction drawn between truth and error, and Catholicity and all forms of heresy. **When she thinks it good to use physical force, she will use it** . . . But will the Catholic Church give bond that she will not persecute at all? Will she guarantee absolute freedom and equality of all churches and all faiths? The Catholic Church gives no bonds for her good behavior."—*The Western Watchman*, December 24, 1908 [RC].

The historian William Lecky (1838-1903) described it this way:

**"That the Church of Rome has shed more innocent blood than any other institution that has**

**ever existed** among mankind, will be questioned by no Protestant who has a competent knowledge of history."—*W.E.H. Lecky, History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe*, 1910 ed., Vol. 2, p. 32.

**8 - The little horn would think to change God's times and laws.** "And think to change times and laws" *Daniel 7:25*. "And think to change times and the law" in the Revised Version.

Ferraris, a noted Roman Catholic writer, says:

"The pope is of so great authority and power that he can modify, explain, or interpret even divine laws . . . **The pope can modify divine law, since his power is not of man, but of God**, and he acts as a vicegerent of God upon earth."—*Lucius Ferraris, Prompta Bibliotheca*, art. "Papa."

From Pope Nicholas' time we have this:

**"The pope has authority and has often exercised it, to dispense with the commands of Christ . . . The pope's will stands for reason. He can dispense above the law; and of wrong make right, by correcting and changing the laws."**

If you will read the Ten Commandments in a Catholic catechism, you will find that the fourth commandment is made to teach something entirely different from Bible truth. **This power was to "think to change" God's law. A power that changes God's law exalts itself above God.** There is another Bible prediction about this:

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; **who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.**"—*2 Thessalonians 2:3-4*.

The fourth of the Ten Commandments concerns the weekly Sabbath. Thus, **if the little horn power was to change the "times" of God's law, we would expect some tampering with the Sabbath commandment, which deals with time.**

The Fourth Commandment says this:

**"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work . . . For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it."**—*Exodus 20:8-11*.

**But the Catholic Church decided that it would change the Fourth Commandment, by setting aside the Bible Sabbath, and in its place exalting a day never declared by God in the Bible to be holy.**

"The Catholic Church for over one thousand

years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, **changed the day from Saturday to Sunday.**”—*Catholic Mirror*, September 23, 1893.

From Peter Geiermann's *Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*, we read this:

“Q.—Which is the Sabbath day?

“A.—Saturday is the Sabbath day.

“Q.—Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

“A.—We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because **the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.**”—Page 50.

Of the 60 canons issued by the Council of Laodicea, in A.D. 364, Canon 29 decreed:

“Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday, but shall work on that day.”

**Not only did the papal little horn power insist that Christians keep Sunday, the first day of the week, but it decreed that they were required to work on Saturday, the seventh-day Sabbath of the Ten Commandments.**

In the authoritative *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, it is written:

“But the church of God [the Catholic Church] has in her wisdom ordained that the celebration of the Sabbath day should be transferred to the Lord's day.”

This catechism was published by order of Pope Pius V and is authoritative for Roman Catholic doctrine.

**9 - The little horn would be in supremacy 1260 years.** “And they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time” (*Daniel 7:25*). **The Bible explains the meaning of this.**

First, we turn to Revelation 12, which describes the length of time that the true church was hunted down and slain by the church of the Dark Ages:

“And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there **a thousand two hundred and threescore days.**”—*Revelation 12:6*.

“And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for **a time, and times, and half a time.**”—*Revelation 12:14*.

**The two time spans are obviously the same.** Comparing them, we discover that the “time, times, and half a time” of Daniel 7:25 is the same as the “1260 days” of Revelation 12:14.

**In prophetic time, a day stands for a year, so 1260 days stands for 1260 years.**

“After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years,

and ye shall know My breach of promise.”—*Numbers 14:34*.

“Thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.”—*Ezekiel 4:6*.

Based on what we have just learned, in the other prophetic measure, “time, times, and half a time” (one time, 2 times, and half a time), **a “time” would therefore have to stand for 360 days;** for 1260 divided by 3½ would be 360. In ancient times, the year was estimated at 360 days in length.

**The certainty of this year-day principle is demonstrated by the exact fulfillment of the great prophecy of the seventy weeks, which we will learn about in the next chapter.**

Indeed, a period of three and a half literal years would be absurd as far as the fulfillment of the prophecy is concerned; so these must be symbolic prophetic years.

Therefore, according to Bible prophecy, the papacy would continue in power for 1260 years.

**10 - Its dominion was to be taken away.** “And they shall take away his dominion” (*Daniel 7:26*). **In 1798, exactly 1260 years from A.D. 538, the revolutionary armies of France, led by General Louis Alexandre Berthier, took the pope prisoner, and he died in exile in France 18 months later. The entire papal government was dissolved, and the papacy itself was abolished. It was at this time that the papacy received a “deadly wound” (*Revelation 13:3*). This was later to be healed, for it is predicted that the papacy will come back into power again.**

**The prophecy of Daniel 7 ends the same as that of Daniel 2—with the great truth that Christ Jesus, the Lord, is to rule the entire world. But He will not rule it alone;—He is to share it with His people!**

“But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.”—*Daniel 7:18*.

**Those faithful ones who, in all ages, whether or not they were persecuted for their faith, who remained faithful to God to the end—will share with Christ in that eternal kingdom!** Some may have died in lonely dungeons, but the time is coming when they will reign with Him forever.

“And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.”—*Daniel 7:27*.

**After the 1260 years of supremacy of the papal church, temporarily broken in A.D. 1798, God was to convene His court in heaven. The**

### Judgment was to begin.

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened."—*Daniel 7:9-10*.

*In the next three chapters, we are going to learn exactly what this Judgment is and how we can prepare for it.*

### SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

**The Bible verse, *Daniel 7:25*, is very important in helping to identify the little horn, the time span during which it exercised its greatest power, and its effort to change God's Moral Law.**

**"And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."**—*Daniel 7:25*.

Leroy E. Froom, in his four-volume set, *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, found the records of 221 Bible scholars, going back hundreds of years, who had written down their understanding of the prophecy of the little horn of Daniel 7:25. Of these 221, **of all faiths including Catholic, 211 said it was the papacy.** Only 10 thought it meant any other power.

He also found statements by 182 Bible scholars of all faiths concerning the prophecy of a future man who would think he was sitting in God's temple, showing himself that he was God. Of these, **181 agreed that it was the pope.** *Here is that Bible passage:*

**"Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."**—*2 Thessalonians 2:4*.

**Regarding the first (leopard) beast power of Revelation 13**, he also found the records of statements made by 176 Bible scholars of all faiths. Of these **176, 130 said it was the papacy**, 38 said it was Rome (which means the same thing), and only 8 gave some other interpretation.

### MY COMMITMENT

Father in heaven, help me to determine that I will prove true to Thee in these last days, as the prophecies of Daniel 7 near their end. In Jesus's name I ask this. Amen.

**COMING NEXT**—We will first discover that, just as Daniel 7 focused our attention on the little horn power, so Daniel 8 reviews some of those historical facts,—and then carries us into a wonderful new truth about God's Sanctuary.

# The Master Key to Bible Prophecy

## The Longest Bible Prophecy

**When a man builds a house, he first lays a solid foundation. Then he begins constructing the house. The foundation for the study of historical prophecy is Daniel 2, where it tells us about the great metallic image of gold, silver, brass, iron, and clay. This image represented the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecia, Rome, and the ten main divisions of the Roman kingdom; most of which grew up into the modern nations of Europe. God's kingdom, yet to come, was symbolized by a great, supernatural Stone, which would end all the nations of earth.**

**In Daniel 7, we learned more about those same four kingdoms, and the ten divisions which came from the fourth one. The ten horns of Daniel 7 correspond to the ten toes of Daniel 2.**

**The little horn was the papal Roman power, in supremacy for 1260 years, from A.D. 538 to 1798. Sometime after 1798 God's judgment was to sit and His kingdom was to be set up.**

### DANIEL EIGHT BEGINS

**Two years after receiving the vision of Daniel 7, Daniel had another vision, which is given in Daniel 8.**

"I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai. Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river **a ram which had two horns**: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great."—*Daniel 8:2-4*.

**In verse 20, we are given the identity of the ram. It was the next great empire: Medo-Persia.**

"The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia."

As the Medo-Persian bear of Daniel 7:5 raised up on one side first, so one of this ram's horns was higher than the other. This indicates that one of the powers of this dual monarchy would be stronger than the other. But we here learn that the strongest came up last.

"The Medes were at first the leading people."—*Philip V. Myers, General History, p. 59.*

Later the Persians were in the ascendancy, and the kingdom became the Persian Empire. Persia was originally a small district in Media; but its ruler, Cyrus, started a revolt, conquered the entire nation of Media, and then proceeded to conquer Babylon.

But many years later a battle occurred between this nation and the one which followed it:

"And as I was considering, behold, **an he goat came from the west** on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. **And he came to the ram that had two horns**, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: **and there was no power in the ram to stand before him**, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand."—*Daniel 8:5-7*.

**So the next great empire, Greece, came to power.** The Grecians, under the leadership of Alexander the Great, came from the west and conquered the Persian Empire at the Battle of Arbela in 331 B.C.

"And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king."—*Daniel 8:21*.

The four-winged leopard of Daniel 7 was swift, and so was the he-goat which "touched not the ground." Both described Alexander's incredible speed in conquest. But then, at the young age of 33, Alexander suddenly died of acute alcoholism. Then, as we learned earlier, **the empire was divided into four large sections.**

"**And when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones** toward the four winds of heaven."—*Daniel 8:8*.

This occurred 22 years after Alexander's death, when after the Battle of Ipsus (301 B.C.) his warring generals divided the kingdom into four parts—east, west, north, south—"toward the four winds of heaven." Interestingly enough, the tide of battle was turned by a large herd of war elephants.

**Next arose that same "little horn" power again,** which gained great power—and then persecuted God's people and "magnified himself" against God.

"**And out of one of them came forth a little horn**, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. And it waxed great, **even to the host of heaven**; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, **he magnified himself even to the prince of the host.**"—*Daniel 8:9-11*.

**The Prophet Daniel was told that this vision**

of Daniel 8 would extend down to the “last days” (verse 17). So since we now live in the time of the end, this is something we should understand.

### 2300 DAYS UNEXPLAINED

**When the eighth chapter ended, all of the prophecies in it had been explained to Daniel by the angel Gabriel, except verse 14:**

“And he said unto me, **Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the Sanctuary be cleansed.**”

**The angel returned a few weeks later and provided the missing information.** But first, Daniel studied the Old Testament writings and prayed earnestly for guidance.

“In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications.”—*Daniel 9:2-3.*

Daniel’s prayer is in verses 4 to 19. **He was deeply concerned that Jerusalem was still in ruins**, after Nebuchadnezzar’s destruction of it nearly 70 years earlier. —*Yet, in his study, Daniel found two passages in the book of Jeremiah promising that God would restore Jerusalem after 70 years!*

“And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and **these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.**”—*Jeremiah 25:11.*

“For thus saith the Lord, That **after seventy years be accomplished** at Babylon I will visit you, and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. **Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you.** And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord.”—*Jeremiah 29:10-14.*

**God had promised help—when they prayed to Him.** And now Daniel was doing just that! **But Daniel was also concerned about the sanctuary**, which needed to be rebuilt.

“Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of Thy servant, and his supplications, and cause Thy face to shine upon Thy sanctuary.”—*Daniel 9:17.*

**However, Daniel 8:14 had not yet been explained to Daniel:** “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the Sanctuary be cleansed” (*Daniel 8:14*).

Could it be, Daniel wondered, that 2300 years must elapse before the sanctuary at Jerusalem was rebuilt? Daniel was deeply concerned.

“Yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at

the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, **I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.** At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and **I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.**”—*Daniel 9:21-23.*

(It is of interest that Gabriel was sent to help Daniel at the beginning of his prayer, recorded in Daniel 9. By this we know that the angel’s journey from heaven took less than a few minutes! Angels, being spirit beings, are able to do things which humans cannot now do.)

**Gabriel told him to “consider the vision.” This could only be that part of the vision of Daniel 8, given to him only a few weeks before, which had not yet been explained**—which was the time prophecy about the Sanctuary in Daniel 8:14, which had left Daniel “astonished.”

As we study what Gabriel explained to Daniel, **we want to keep in mind that, in Bible prophecy, a day stands for a year;** thus 2300 days are actually 2300 years.

“After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know My breach of promise.”—*Numbers 14:34.*

“Thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.”—*Ezekiel 4:6.*

### THE SEVENTY WEEKS

**Gabriel’s very first words clearly show that he is going to explain the prophecy of Daniel 8:14.**

“**Seventy weeks** are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.”—*Daniel 9:24.*

**How many days would seventy weeks be?** According to the prophetic-day-equals-a-literal-year principle, it would be  $7 \times 70 = 490$  prophetic days or literal years. The Hebrew of the above phrase, “*determined upon*,” means “cut off for.” **The 490 years are cut off from the first part of the total 2300 years—for the Jewish people. It would mark their last opportunity, as a nation, to repent and return to God.**

During this 490 years, Jewish transgression was to reach its limit in the slaying of God’s Son and the persecution of His followers afterward.

In the last part of this period, Christ was to end the sin offerings and make reconciliation for iniquity.

uity. He was to bring His everlasting righteousness to men. The vision was to be sealed and the Most Holy anointed.

**If we can find the date for the beginning of the 70 weeks (490 years), we shall also have the date for the beginning of the 2300 years**, of which the 490 years are the first part.

Verse 25 tells us how to find this starting date:

**“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.”—Daniel 9:25.**

Follow this closely: 7 weeks + 62 (“threescore and two”) weeks = 69 weeks, or 483 prophetic days or literal years. **So the first part of the 490 years was 483 years, and the last part would be 7 years.**

**This 483 years were to begin “from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem” (verse 25).**

**This 483 years would reach to “Messiah the Prince.”** “Messiah” means the “anointed one.” Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit at the time of His baptism (*Matthew 3:13-17; Acts 10:38*), and went forth as the Messiah. This occurred in the year A.D. 27.

It should be mentioned here that Jesus was actually born before A.D. 1, the date erroneously set by Archbishop James Ussher in 1654 for Christ’s birth. Jesus was 30 years old when He was baptized; *Luke 3:23*. That Christ was not born in A.D. 1 is evident from the fact that when He was born, Herod the Great was still alive, and Herod died in 4 B.C. (*Matthew 2:13-20*).

Subtracting 27 from 483 gives us 456. Since the year A.D. 27 was not fully ended when Jesus was baptized, the extra part of a year would carry us over to **457 B.C. as the starting date of the 70 weeks (490 years), the beginning of the 2300 years.**

**Checking in history, we find that exactly what the Bible said would happen—did happen that year! In 457 B.C. the commandment was issued to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.** The Babylonians had destroyed it, and the Medo-Persians helped restore it. The project required three imperial edicts:

**“And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.”—Ezra 6:14.**

It was God’s command that counted, and it took the commands of three kings before God counted it as the *one command*, and so it is recorded in Scripture. **The final command was given in the seventh year of Artaxerxes.** “Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven” (*Psalms 119:89*).

*(Something needs to be clarified here: In figuring from B.C. to A.D. dates, it is necessary to take into account the fact that there is no “0 year” between 1 B.C. and A.D. 1 (as there are in figuring positive to negative integers, such as temperature). Instead, we have 2 B.C., 1 B.C., A.D. 1, A.D. 2, etc. For this reason, for example, in figuring where the 490 years ends, when subtracting 490 from 457 B.C., we must add an extra year because of the missing year between B.C. and A.D. Therefore, 490 years from 457 B.C., takes us to A.D. 34, not to A.D. 33. We cannot add or subtract the way we would, going past 0° on a thermometer.*

#### THE LAST WEEK OF THE SEVENTY

There remains only one of the seventy weeks. **That last prophetic week of seven literal years begins in A.D. 27 and runs to A.D. 34.**

Because this final week is extremely important, God split it off from the seventy weeks, so we would give it special attention. **Christ was baptized and began His 3½-year ministry in the fall of A.D. 27. He was crucified in the spring of A.D. 31, and then something special happened in the fall of A.D. 34.**

Daniel 9:26 explains what happened **in the middle of this final week:**

**“And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself.”—Daniel 9:26.**

**Christ was “cut off.” He died on Calvary on Passover day, at the hour of the evening sacrifice, to save mankind!** The exact year when He was to die was predicted in the Bible in this verse—hundreds of years earlier! Christ did not die for Himself; *He died for you and me!* He died to save the whole world, even though, tragically, the great majority will have refused it.

**“There is a Man whose life story was written more than five hundred years before He was born.**

It was set down in a book, and while that Man was living the Book was in existence. The Book gave the name of the city where the Man would be born. It also gave His family name and the work He would do. This Book tells how the Man would minister to the sick, and of the wonderful work He would accomplish. He would be despised by His own race, accused and betrayed by one of His best friends. The book tells the exact price of the betrayal and what the money would be used for. **It states the very year, day, and hour when this Man would die.”—Daniel R. Guild.**

Go once again to Calvary—and view the Son of God dying of a broken heart for your personal sins. Give Him your life anew; give Him all you have and are. Live only for Him! Determine that, by His forgiving, enabling grace, you will obey His written Word and live a clean, godly life.

At the moment that Christ the Lamb of God, the antitypical sacrifice to which all the ceremonial laws pointed, died on Calvary—**the ceremonial law**

**ended. It was nailed to His cross, while God's law of Ten Commandments was forever vindicated as the moral standard by which mankind must live.**

"And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease."—*Daniel 9:27*.

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross."—*Colossians 2:14*.

At that same moment of Christ's death, a divine hand reached down and tore the inner veil of the temple from top to bottom, signifying that **the services in the earthly sanctuary were forever at an end, as far as God was concerned.**

"Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent."—*Matthew 27:50-51*.

**But, after Christ's death, 3½ years of the 490 remained. This remaining time was allotted to the Jewish nation. Would it return to God and accept Christ?**

"And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week."—*Daniel 9:27*.

**During that time, Stephen was stoned to death by the Jews, and their great persecution of the Christians began** (*Acts 7:59-8:1*). Regrettably, when the great majority refused,—in A.D. 34, at the end of the 70 weeks, the Jewish nation no longer constituted God's special people. But, of course, if repentant, individual Jews could afterward still be saved, just as anyone else can.

This explains what the Apostle Paul said:

"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but **seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.**"—*Acts 13:46*.

**It is an intriguing fact that Daniel 9:24-27 provides the date when Jesus Christ, the coming Messiah, would come to earth.** Tragically, Jewish officials, from Christ's time on down to the present, say that the Messiah has not yet come. But, in order to do this, they must keep their people from studying the ninth chapter of Daniel! **Here is their official statement forbidding study of that chapter!**

"May the bones of the hands and bones of the fingers decay and decompose, of him who turns the pages of the book of Daniel, **to find out the time of Daniel 9:24-27**, and may his memory rot from off the face of the earth forever."—*Talmudic Law*, p. 978, Section 2, Line 28.

## THE REMAINING 1810 YEARS

**The 70 weeks, or 490 years, were part of the 2300 years.** Since the 490 years reached to A.D. 34,—**the remaining 1810 years would reach to 1844. At this time, according to Daniel 8:14, the Sanctuary was to be cleansed.**

**What was this "sanctuary"?** It could not be the earthly Temple; for that was destroyed in A.D. 70, and has never been rebuilt. A Muslim shrine (the Mosque of Omar; also called the Dome of the Rock) now rests on the site where the ancient Temple once stood on the Temple Mount in eastern Jerusalem.

**The year 1844 was the date set by the Bible for the cleansing of the Sanctuary to begin.** It came shortly after 1798, the end of the 1260 years of papal power.

What was this cleansing? Was it connected to the judgment? The next chapter is very important.

## MY COMMITMENT

Heavenly Father, help me day by day to live in such a manner that I am prepared for whatever tasks and opportunities I have to witness to these great truths. Truly, we are living in the closing hours of earth's history. In Jesus's name I ask it. Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—We are going to learn exactly where Jesus is right now, and what He is doing to help us, day by day, to prepare for heaven. The Sanctuary Truth is a precious treasure.

# The Two Sanctuaries

*The Power of Christ's Atonement*

**A single-sheet almanac arrived at the farm house. In the center was a reproduction of Holman Hunt's picture, "The Light of the World." Mother and son looked at it with wonder, and it was placed in a prominent place on the wall.**

When the father came home for dinner, the eight-year-old boy said, "Daddy, Daddy! Who is it?" "It's a man" was the reply, for the father did not want to even mention the name of Christ. But the boy kept asking; and he said, "It is Christ." "What is He doing, Daddy?" "He's knocking at the door." "How long will He knock?" was the query. "I don't know" was the response.

**"Daddy, what is He knocking for?" "Well, He wants to go inside." "But Daddy, why don't they open the door?"**

Throughout the dinner, the boy continued. "I'd open the door, wouldn't you?" All the while the mother quietly prayed.

The father began to feel uncomfortable. **That night he knelt with his wife and dedicated His life to Jesus Christ.** He spent the next ten years learning more about the death and intercession of His Saviour and teaching it to his son.

## GOD WILL PROVIDE A LAMB

"Without shedding of blood is no remission" of sin (*Hebrews 9:22*). If Christ had not given His life on Calvary to redeem us, we could not be saved.

Just as a scarlet thread runs through the center of every inch of British Navy rope, so also **the blood of Christ is the key to all of the truths given in the Bible. Salvation from sin is by blood sacrifice.** "The life of the flesh is in the blood" (*Leviticus 17:11*), and the blood—the very life—of Jesus Christ was poured out that you and I might cooperate with Heaven so we could inherit eternal life. Take away the blood, and you take away salvation. Eliminate the cross, and every man will die in his sins.

"The cleansing stream I see, I see, I plunge, and O it cleanseth me! O praise the Lord! it cleanseth me. It cleanseth me, yes, it cleanseth me."

**The blood of Christ lies at the heart of the entire Sanctuary service.** Abel, the second son of Adam, offered a blood sacrifice just outside the gates of the Garden of Eden, which his parents had been forced to leave after they sinned.

The bloodless offering of Cain, his brother, was

rejected (*Genesis 4:3-7*). So it is clear that God gave careful instruction about these sacrifices, or Cain's offering could not justly have been rejected.

You will recall the story of Abraham. He told his son, Isaac, **"God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering"** (*Genesis 22:8*). After Abraham fulfilled a special test, he was told:

"Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering."—*Genesis 22:12-13*.

**But there was no voice protecting Christ when He laid down His life for us.** Entering the thicket of this world, He voluntarily died for our sins, that we might inherit eternal life.

## THE EARTHLY SANCTUARY

When Moses led Israel from Egyptian slavery, God gave His people something which would help them better understand the coming death of Christ to redeem the world:

**"Let them make Me a Sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it."**—*Exodus 25:8-9*.

**This was to be the center of their worship. God promised to dwell there. Notice that the basic arrangement was to be copied from a special pattern.**

In the early years, this earthly sanctuary was portable, so it could be moved from place to place in the travels of the Israelites. Later, God directed Solomon to build a magnificent Temple in Jerusalem. After being destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, it was rebuilt—but then later destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70. The Muslim Mosque of Omar (the Dome of the Rock) now occupies the site where the earthly Temple once existed.

**There are important truths in the sanctuary, and we want to learn them. Here is its basic arrangement:**

In the days of Moses, the sanctuary (also called the tabernacle) consisted of a rectangular tent on the western end of a larger **outer court**.

Just beyond the entrance, on the east, was the brazen **altar of burnt offering**, where animal sacrifices were offered, to typify the later sacrifice of Christ for our sins.

Beyond that was a brazen **laver**, where the priest washed his hands and feet before entering the sanctuary itself.

(It should be mentioned that the entrance to God's sanctuary always faced toward the east, so those entering it would have their backs to the rising sun. The heathen would face the rising sun and worship it, but this was an abomination to the Lord; see *Ezekiel 8:13-18*. Unfortunately, the front of many modern Christian cathedrals face west, so the worshipers inside will face east as they worship.)

**The sanctuary itself had two apartments.** Also called the holy place, the *first apartment* contained three articles of furniture, each made of solid gold.

On the right was the **table of shewbread**, with the bread of the Presence stacked on top. On the left was the seven-branched **golden lampstand** (called a "candlestick" in the KJV). Next to the dividing inner veil, separating the two apartments, was the **golden altar** with a golden bowl of burning incense on it.

Beyond this **inner veil** was the *second apartment*, or most holy place, which had the golden **ark of the covenant**, containing God's covenant with His people: **the two tables of the Ten Commandments**, written by the finger of God on stone and given to Moses. As the foundation of His government, it rests just below His throne. (It is also called the **ark of the testimony**, because the two tables contained God's special statement to the people.)

The golden **mercy seat** covered this ark; and on either side was one of two solid gold figures of **cherubim**, which represent the angels guarding the ark and looking down at this, the place of final atonement when the day of Judgment is ended.

Above the mercy seat and between the cherubim was the **Shekinah** glory—the presence of God within a cloud of radiance.

"And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony."—*Exodus 25:22*.

#### THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY

**This earthly sanctuary (also called the tabernacle) was patterned after the great original, the Sanctuary in heaven.** In God's first message to build this earthly tabernacle, He mentioned three times that it was to be constructed according to a special pattern:

"Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it . . . And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount."—*Exodus 25:8-9, 40*.

Regarding the heavenly Sanctuary, which the earthly was patterned after, **the Apostle Paul tells us that Christ is our great High Priest in that**

#### Sanctuary:

"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the Sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

"For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if He were on earth, He should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount."—*Hebrews 8:1-5*.

Both sanctuaries, the one on earth and the one in heaven, had the same articles of furniture. **Moses and Paul both described what was in the earthly tabernacle:**

The lampstand ("candlestick" in the KJV), the golden altar of incense, and the table of shewbread were in the first apartment (*Exodus 25:37; 40:26-27; Hebrews 9:2*).

The ark of the covenant, the law of God, the mercy seat, the two cherubim were in the second apartment (*Exodus 25:10-11, 17-19; Deuteronomy 5:22; 10:2, 4-5*).

**John the Revelator was later given a vision into heaven—and there he saw some of the furnishings in the heavenly Sanctuary:** the golden lampstands inside the open door of the heavenly temple (*Revelation 1:12-13; 4:5*), the golden altar of incense (*Revelation 8:3-4*), and the "ark of His testament" (*Revelation 11:19*).

**The services of the earthly sanctuary (at that time held in the Temple at Jerusalem) had no more significance in the eyes of God when Christ died on Calvary.** God signified this by tearing the inner veil of the sanctuary from top to bottom at that moment.

"Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom."—*Matthew 27:50-51*.

**After His resurrection, Christ ascended to heaven and entered the heavenly Sanctuary.** He is the high priest of this heavenly Sanctuary, which was not made by human hands:

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."—*Hebrews 9:24*.

Just as Israel had the morning and evening sacrifices, so should we make daily confession and daily consecration of our lives anew to God, trusting

His atoning grace. **As the incense ascended daily on earth, so should our prayers ascend to God** as a sweet fragrance of gratitude for His continual mercies to us (*Revelation 8:3-4*). As the priest daily looked by faith beyond the veil to the mercy seat he could not see, so should we by faith look to Jesus as He ministers for us in the Sanctuary above.

#### THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

But now we come to an extremely important subject: **According to the directions God had given, one special day in the year was the “day of atonement.”**

“Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement.”—*Leviticus 23:27*.

On this special occasion, atonement by blood was made for the sanctuary and for the people. **This was when the “cleansing of the sanctuary” occurred.** Both the sanctuary and the people were, in figure, cleansed from their sins.

“And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness . . . **For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean** from all your sins before the Lord.”—*Leviticus 16:16, 30*.

**What was done in the earthly service, in figure, is to be done in the heavenly Sanctuary in reality.**

“Atonement” means reconciliation and blotting out of sin. This Day of Atonement was also, in a special sense, the day of judgment. It was God’s last call, in the yearly cycle, for His people to repent of sin and come under the atoning blood.

“For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people.”—*Leviticus 23:29*.

**In the typical services on earth,** all through the year, the people brought their sacrifices and confessed their sins. In symbol, the sins were transferred to the tabernacle as the priest carried in some of the blood.

Then, once a year, on the Day of Atonement, a final opportunity was given for the blotting out of those sins. It was a solemn day! It was, in type, the annual day of judgment.

**In the antitypical services in the heavenly Sanctuary,** we are to come to Jesus; repent of our sins; and, by His enabling grace, obey Him. Christ is our great High Priest interceding on our behalf in the Sanctuary above. —But the prophecy declared with certainty that this final cleansing must also take place.

“Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the Sanctuary be cleansed.”—*Daniel 8:14*.

#### WHAT BEGAN IN 1844

In an earlier chapter we learned that the angel Gabriel made a special point of showing Daniel when this 2300 prophetic days, or literal years, would end.

**In 1844, some sanctuary was to be cleansed. It could not be the earthly, because there was none on earth** after A.D. 70. Some thought that it might be the planet earth, which would be destroyed by fire. But this was a mistake; for the Bible never said our world was a sanctuary, but instead clearly pointed to the existence of the heavenly Sanctuary—where Christ was after He ascended to heaven in A.D. 31. **The earthly sanctuary was a type of the heavenly, and in 1844 the hour struck for the beginning of that cleansing. It was the beginning of Heaven’s judgment.**

God plans His work carefully, and He fulfills those plans. “When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son” (*Galatians 4:4*). At the end of the 483 years of Daniel 9, just as predicted hundreds of years earlier, Jesus was baptized and anointed by the Holy Ghost. That occurred in A.D. 27. He was also crucified at the exact stroke of the prophetic clock in A.D. 31, at the time of the spring Passover.

**So we can know that in 1844, when the work of cleansing the heavenly Sanctuary was to begin, Jesus entered the second apartment of the heavenly Sanctuary and began that final judgment-hour work.**

The sins of the people had, in type, been transferred from the outer court to the first apartment all through the year; **and on the day of atonement, those sins were removed and the people cleansed from them** when blood was taken all the way into the second apartment and ministered there.

So in the heavenly antitype: **The actual records of sin were recorded in heaven; and, during this special Investigative Judgment which began in 1844, those records had to be examined in order to see who would be saved and who would be lost.**

As the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary on the yearly day of atonement was the final day to get right with God, a day of judgment, so **the cleansing of the heavenly Sanctuary is God’s appointed time for the final judgment.**

“He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world.”—*Acts 17:31*.

The judgment was future in Paul’s day. It was “judgment to come” (*Acts 24:25*). It did not come

before death or at death but after death.

“It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”—*Hebrews 9:27*.

Only those living in the closing days of earth’s history will be judged before death.

**This is the Investigative Judgment. The cases of all written in the book of life must be decided before Christ comes, since He brings His reward with Him.**

*Here is a passage by a Biblical scholar which nicely explains this:*

“The blood of Christ, pleaded in behalf of penitent believers, secured their pardon and acceptance with the Father, **yet their sins still remained upon the books of record**. As in the typical service there was a work of atonement at the close of the year, so **before Christ’s work for the redemption of men is completed there is a work of atonement for the removal of sin from the Sanctuary**. This is the service which began when the 2300 days ended. At that time, as foretold by Daniel the prophet, our High Priest entered the Most Holy, to perform the last division of His solemn work—to cleanse the Sanctuary.

“As anciently the sins of the people were by faith placed upon the sin offering and through its blood transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary, **so in the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith placed upon Christ and transferred, in fact, to the heavenly Sanctuary**. And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, **so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded**.

“**But before this can be accomplished, there must be an examination of the books of record** to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement. **The cleansing of the Sanctuary therefore involves a work of investigation—a work of judgment. This work must be performed prior to the coming of Christ** to redeem His people; for when He comes, His reward is with Him to give to every man according to his works. Revelation 22:12.

“Thus those who followed in the light of the prophetic word saw that, instead of coming to the earth at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844, Christ then entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly Sanctuary to perform the closing work of atonement preparatory to His coming.”—*Great Controversy*, 421-422.

**All this was symbolized, in figure, in the typical service in the earthly sanctuary:**

“And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year.”—*Leviticus 16:34*.

“I lay my sins on Jesus, The spotless Lamb of

God; He bears them all, and frees us From the accursed load. I bring my guilt to Jesus, To wash the crimson stains White in His blood most precious, Till not one spot remains.”

*What can be more important to us, who live in these last days, than the Investigative Judgment? The next chapter will give us still more information about it.*

## MY COMMITMENT

Father in heaven, help me in my prayers and daily witness to come by faith to Jesus in the Sanctuary above. It is so wonderful to know where He is and what He is doing right now! Thank you for this wonderful truth. In Jesus’s name I ask this. Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—The important truth of the Investigative Judgment, which is now in progress. This is an extremely important topic.

# The Investigative Judgment

## The Cleansing of the Sanctuary

**In the Chapel of St. George, in Westminster Abbey, is a memorial of World War II.** It consists of four bound volumes that contain the names of 60,000 civilians killed in the city of London by enemy action. A light shines upon one open volume. Each day it is turned to a new page. It is a book of death.

**When Daniel Webster**, the great legislator and orator, was asked, "What is the greatest question that has ever crossed your mind?" he paused and then replied, "*My personal accountability to God.*"

### A SPECIAL JUDGMENT

**In heaven, there are several books. One is the Book of Life. You and I want our names entered into that book. We want to be protected by the blood of Christ when our names come up in the Judgment.**

"He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world."—*Acts 17:31*.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."—*2 Corinthians 5:10*.

**When Jesus Christ comes to earth the second time, He will bring His reward with Him,** "to give every man according as his work shall be" (*Revelation 22:12*).

Since this is true, **it is clearly evident that a work of judgment must take place before Christ returns to give those rewards.**

We earlier learned when we viewed the little horn of Daniel 7, that **after the 1260 years of papal church supremacy from A.D. 538 to 1798, the judgment was to sit. We have found that A.D. 1844 is the Bible date for the beginning of that work.**

**At that time, the cleansing of the heaven Sanctuary began, as the records of sinful men started to be examined.**

We would expect that Adam's name would be called first, and eventually the last name will be reached.

**This work was yet future in Paul's day,** for "he reasoned of . . . judgment to come" (*Acts 24:25*). We have learned that, **just as the years of Christ's baptism and death were specifically foretold, so God set the clock of eternity to strike, at a certain**

**time, the hour for the Investigative Judgment to begin.**

**What must this scene, where the judgment occurs in heaven, be like? The glory and power and magnificence of it must be truly immense.** We are given a view of the opening day in these words:

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

"A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened . .

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him."—*Daniel 7:9-11, 13*.

**First**, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down." The phrase, "*cast down*," really means "placed" or "arranged." Seats were arranged in position in various places before the throne of God.

**Second**, God is the presiding judge, for "the Ancient of days did sit." Verse 9 shows that He is God the Father.

**Third**, we are afforded a glimpse of the utter majesty of God Himself.

"Whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him."—*Daniel 7:9-10*.

**Fourth**, the mathematics of verse 10 indicates that millions upon millions of angels are present.

**Fifth**, Christ "came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him" (*verse 13*). How very thankful we are that "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (*1 John 2:1*).

—*What a view all this gives us of the opening of the Investigative Judgment in the Sanctuary in heaven!*

**Jesus is our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Intercessor at the judgment bar of God.** —For God the Father created all things by Jesus Christ (*Ephesians 3:9*), He reconciled the world to Himself by Jesus Christ (*2 Corinthians 5:18*), and He will judge the world by Jesus Christ (*Acts 17:31*).

Here is a remarkable comment:

"The priests and rulers [at the trial of Christ] had set themselves up as judges to condemn Christ's work, but He declared Himself their judge, and the judge of all the earth. The world has been committed to Christ, and through Him has come every blessing from God to the fallen race. **He was the Redeemer**

**before as after His incarnation. As soon as there was sin, there was a Saviour.** He has given light and life to all, and according to the measure of light given, each is to be judged. And He who has given the light, He who has followed the soul with tenderest entreaty, seeking to win it from sin to holiness, is in one its advocate and judge. From the opening of the great controversy in heaven, Satan has maintained his cause through deception; and Christ has been working to unveil his schemes and to break his power. It is He who has encountered the deceiver, and who through all the ages has been seeking to wrest the captives from his grasp, who will pass judgment upon every soul.”—*Desire of Ages*, 210.

**While probationary time lasts, Christ is willing to accept and win our case at court.** But only if, in humility of heart and simple, childlike submission and obedience, we let Him remove our sins and purify our hearts.

#### THE BOOKS OF RECORD

**The books of record in heaven, in which the names and the deeds of men are registered, are to determine the decisions of the judgment.** At the opening of this judgment, “The judgment was set, and the books were opened” (*Daniel 7:10*).

One of these books is the **book of life**.

“Another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”—*Revelation 20:12*.

**We want to make sure that our names are retained in the book of life.** Daniel, looking down to “a time of trouble, such as never was,” declared that God’s people shall be delivered, “everyone that shall be found written in the book” (*Daniel 12:1*).

John the Revelator wrote that those only shall enter the city of God whose names “are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (*Revelation 21:27*).

Then there is “a **book of remembrance**,” written before God, in which are recorded the good deeds of “them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name” (*Malachi 3:16*). Their words of faith, their acts of love, are registered in heaven.

**Every deed of heartfelt kindness to others is to be found in this book of God’s remembrance.** There every temptation resisted, every evil overcome, every word of tender pity expressed, is faithfully kept. And every act of sacrifice, every suffering and sorrow endured for Christ’s sake is recorded.

“Thou tellest my wanderings: put Thou my tears into Thy bottle: are they not in Thy book?”—*Psalms 56:8*.

There is also a book in which the sins of men are recorded: the **book of sin**. The most secret plans and actions of men are in those books.

**“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing,** whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”—*Ecclesiastes 12:14*.

**“Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.** For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”—*Matthew 12:36-37*.

“The Lord . . . will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.”—*I Corinthians 4:5*.

“Behold, it is written before Me, . . . your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the Lord.”—*Isaiah 65:6-7*.

**It is all there—in the books of heaven. And the books are opened in the Judgment.**

#### THE STANDARD OF THE JUDGMENT

**The standard of the Judgment is the law of God. It is the law book of the assembled court.** This is what we would expect, for it is the great moral standard which God has given us to live by.

**“Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment,** with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”—*Ecclesiastes 12:13-14*.

“So speak ye, and so do, **as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty**.”—*James 2:12*.

Those who in the judgment are “accounted worthy” (*Luke 20:35*) will have a part in the resurrection of the just. Jesus added that, as part of their reward, they will be “equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection” (*verse 36*).

**The righteous dead will not be raised until after the judgment** at which they are accounted worthy of “the resurrection of life” (*John 5:29*). Therefore, they will not be alive at the time of the judgment when their records are examined and their cases are decided.

**How thankful we can be that Jesus will be their advocate, to plead in their behalf before God.**

“If any man sin, **we have an advocate with the Father**, Jesus Christ the righteous.”—*1 John 2:1*.

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”—*Hebrews 9:24*.

**“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”**—*Hebrews 7:25*.

**A young man was brought into Denver’s west-side court to answer for an alleged offense.**

When his case was called, he stood there silent, not knowing what to say. The clerk read the charge, but the lad stood speechless. The judge, a kindly man, leaned forward on his desk and asked him if he had a lawyer. The boy shook his head. Then the judge motioned to a man in the courtroom who came forward and took his place beside the defendant. He was appointed as his attorney, or advocate.

The two left the courtroom to confer together. Other cases were called and disposed of. Within an hour the lawyer with his young client returned. The boy's case was again called. This time, accompanied by his attorney, he had more confidence; for now he had an advocate to speak for him.

**In the Investigative Judgment, God has provided Jesus Christ as the advocate for all who will, in this life, accept Him and submit their lives to His control.**

#### SUMMARIZING THIS CHAPTER

**Here is an excellent summary of this judgment and how we, today, should prepare for it:**

**"All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names** in the books of heaven; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, **and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out**, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life. The Lord declares, by the prophet Isaiah: 'I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' Isaiah 43:25.

"Said Jesus: **'He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life**, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.' Revelation 3:5. 'Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven.' Matthew 10:32, 33 . .

**"Jesus does not excuse their sins, but shows their penitence and faith, and, claiming for them forgiveness . . . Their names stand enrolled in the book of life, and concerning them it is written: 'They shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy.'** Revelation 3:4.

**"Thus will be realized the complete fulfillment of the new-covenant promise: 'I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.' . . . When the Investigative Judgment closes, Christ will come, and His reward will be with Him to give to every man as his work shall be . . .**

**"Sins that have not been repented of and forsaken will not be pardoned** and blotted out of the books of record, but will stand to witness against

the sinner in the day of God . .

"Those who would share the benefits of the Saviour's mediation should permit nothing to interfere with their duty to perfect holiness in the fear of God. **The precious hours, instead of being given to pleasure, to display, or to gain seeking, should be devoted to an earnest, prayerful study of the Word of truth. The subject of the Sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood** by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill. **Every individual has a soul to save or to lose. Each has a case pending at the bar of God.** Each must meet the great Judge face to face. How important, then, that every mind contemplate often the solemn scene when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, when, with Daniel, every individual must stand in his lot, at the end of the days.

"All who have received the light upon these subjects are to bear testimony of the great truths which God has committed to them. **The Sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ's work in behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth.** It opens to view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of time and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin. It is of the utmost importance that all should thoroughly investigate these subjects and be able to give an answer to everyone that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them.

**"The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the Sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross.** By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven. We must by faith enter within the veil, 'whither the forerunner is for us entered.' Hebrews 6:20. There the light from the cross of Calvary is reflected. There we may gain a clearer insight into the mysteries of redemption. **The salvation of man is accomplished at an infinite expense to heaven; the sacrifice made is equal to the broadest demands of the broken law of God.** Jesus has opened the way to the Father's throne, and through His mediation the sincere desire of all who come to Him in faith may be presented before God."—*Great Controversy*, 483-486, 488-489.

#### FOUR REMARKABLE STORIES

***Before concluding this chapter, let me briefly tell you four incidents in earlier American history which will help explain this:***

One day, D.L. Moody met the governor of a certain State, who told him, "Moody, I have decided to respond to a petition from a great number of people

to grant a pardon to a criminal. I want you to take my pardon to him.”

All the men were called into chapel, and heard Moody, standing in front, say, “I have a pardon for one of you. I do not know you by face, but here is your name.”

Oh, what sudden interest gripped them! Those five or six hundred men scarcely breathed; each wondering, “Is it me?”

When Mr. Moody read the name, a shriek came from someone, and he ran forward. It was almost more than the man could bear.

The governor had a legal right to pardon that man. **Jesus Christ has a legal right to provide us with a pardon**, and more: a passport to heaven.

**But many will not accept it**—before the Judgment begins.

**Here is the second story:** God is gracious, but He will not force the acceptance of His grace upon men. **In 1829, George Wilson in Pennsylvania was sentenced to be hanged** by a United States Court because of the robbery of a mail train near Reading, Pennsylvania, earlier that year.

For some reason, President Andrew Jackson pardoned him on June 14, 1830; but, because of antipathy he had for Jackson, **Wilson refused the pardon**, insisting that it was not a pardon unless he accepted it.

That was a point of law never before raised, and the president called upon the Supreme Court to decide. Chief Justice John Marshall gave the following decision:

**“A pardon is a paper, the value of which depends upon its acceptance** by the person implicated. It is hardly to be supposed that one under sentence of death would refuse to accept a pardon. **But, if it is refused, it is no pardon.** George Wilson must be hanged!” And he was hanged.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation for everyone, irrespective of what he may have done. But it is only for those willing to accept it. Many will not come to Christ and receive it.

**Here is the third story: The Investigative Judgment will later be followed by the Executive Judgment, when the wicked will finally be destroyed. At that time, it will be too late to plead for Christ to defend us in that judgment hour.**

Something had happened, and a man was going to defend himself in criminal court on a very serious charge. There was one attorney capable enough to handle the case, for he had done so on earlier occasions. But this time the man waited too long to contact him.

When he finally did, the attorney considered the

matter and told him that **he could have handled his case if he had come earlier, but he added, “Yesterday, I was appointed your judge.” The man had waited too long.** Just now, Christ is our Advocate—our attorney at the bar of God. He is willing to plead our case. But the time is not far off for each of us, when the Investigative Judgment will end, human probation will forever close, and the wicked will have no one to plead their case. **Christ will then be the judge to execute the sentence against them. It is now that we must come to Him, and plead for His help, while there is still time.**

**And here is a fourth story:** A young man had terribly wronged his mother. But not until she was on her deathbed did he come to her kneeling and, with sobs, pled with her to forgive him.

With her last departing strength she drew close to him and said softly, “My dear boy, I would have forgiven you long ago if you had only accepted it.”

*Jesus is offering us pardon now. Will we come to Him now, and let Him take away our sins and enable us to daily become His humble, obedient children,—before it is too late for us to receive that forgiveness and change of life?*

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#### SPECIAL ABOUT THE JUDGMENT

**It would be well, just now, to summarize the entire judgment work of God.** You may recall that, in the earlier study on the millennium, **mention was made of a judgment in heaven during that 1,000-year period, followed by a different kind of judgment after it ended.** Here is a brief overview of all three judgments:

Christ’s death on the cross vindicated His Father’s law and made it possible for everyone to be brought into harmony with it and be redeemed. But everyone must later be judged before sin and sinners are finally destroyed.

“He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world.”—Acts 17:31.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”—2 Corinthians 5:10.

This work was yet future in Paul’s day, for “he reasoned of . . . judgment to come” (Acts 24:25).

**The first judgment is the Investigative Judgment.** We discussed all aspects of it in this present study, except that no mention was made of the fact that **the examination by this court only deals with the names of those who, at some time while they were alive, professed faith in God.** Their names were entered into the Book of Life in heaven.

During this judgment, names are retained in the

Book of Life, and names are removed.

If this examination reveals that, by their decisions and actions, some were not really children of God, trusting in Him, and becoming more like Him as their lives were brought into conformity to His Moral Law,—their names are removed from the Book of Life and entered into the Book of Death.

**When this judgment ends, the decision as to who will inherit eternal life is forever settled.** So Christ returns for His people very soon afterward.

Here is how one writer summarizes this:

“In the typical service only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service of the Day of Atonement. So in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment **the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period [during the millennium].** Judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel?” 1 Peter 4:17.”—*Great Controversy*, 480.

**The second judgment is the Sentencing Judgment.** This occurs after Christ’s Second Advent, when He takes His faithful ones to heaven. It is at that time that they judge the cases of all the wicked. The purpose for this is twofold.

**First, it is necessary to determine how much punishment in the lake of fire each wicked person and angel (including Satan) will receive** in the final punishment for sin. So God has decided that the redeemed will conduct this work of sentencing judgment.

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the *first* resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”—*Revelation* 20:6.

“But the rest of the dead [the wicked] lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”—*Revelation* 20:5.

“Do ye not know that **the saints shall judge the world?** and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that **we shall judge angels?**”—*1 Corinthians* 6:2-3.

“And [during the millennium] I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, **and judgment was given unto them.**”—*Revelation* 20:4.

**Second, by examining the records, all of the redeemed will have an opportunity to understand exactly why the wicked have been lost.** If this examination had not been made, a question might remain in some minds through all eternity, as why

certain ones who on earth had made such a high profession of godliness were not saved.

**As you will recall, during the millennium Satan is bound to this earth, with no one alive on it except his evil angels;** therefore, “he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season” (*Revelation* 20:3).

**The third judgment is the Executive Judgment.** This occurs at the end of the millennium, when the “judgment written” is executed, or carried out—and the wicked briefly suffer in hellfire before being blotted out of existence forever.

“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”—*Revelation* 20:5.

Satan has had nothing to do for a thousand years, except to impatiently wait for the wicked to be raised. Then, when that happens and they are alive once again,—he plans with them to destroy God’s faithful ones in the Holy City!

“And shall go out to deceive the nations . . . to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city.”—*Revelation* 20:8-9.

**This attempt, by all the wicked, to slaughter good people—is the final proof to all the universe that the wicked deserve to be punished and then utterly perish forever!** Their evil presence should no longer exist anywhere in the universe.

**As soon as the wicked surround the city—the final judgment takes place.** In the following passage, notice that, in addition to other record books, the Book of Life is opened to see if the names of any of the wicked are in it. Because they are not, they are doomed to destruction. Their evil deeds condemn them. It will be clearly seen that there is no fault in God’s mercy or Christ’s sacrifice! The wicked are doomed by their own persistent refusal to repent and, by the grace of Christ, live godly lives.

“And **I saw a great white throne**, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

“And **I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened:** and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and **the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.** And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and **they were judged every man according to their works.**”—*Revelation* 20:11-13.

As the wicked stand around the Holy City in the presence of God, **the entire life of each one passes**

**before his mind,—and he realizes why he is lost.** At that moment, even the wicked understand why they should be destroyed.

—**The great controversy is finished!** Everyone in the universe understands the issues, and of Christ's effort to save the wicked. **The time has come for the wicked to be blotted out of existence.**

**Then “fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them”** (*verse 9*).

“**And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire . . . and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them . . . And death and hell [Greek: the grave] were cast into the lake of fire.** This is the second death. **And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.**”—*Revelation 20:10, 13-15*.

**The wicked and the devil and his angels do not inherit eternal life. Instead, their lives are totally extinguished** “in the second death,” nevermore to exist. In the mercy of God, a very large number of them will probably die rather quickly.

**The fire will then disappear and nothing will afterward remain of the wicked,** but, as it were, a few “ashes” on the ground, which quickly disappear.

“And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.”—*Malachi 4:3*.

**Sin and sinners will then be totally gone—forever!** The entire universe will be pure, clean, and good for all eternity. “There shall be no more curse” (*Revelation 22:3*).

“**He [God] will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time.**”—*Nahum 1:9*.

“**And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death,** neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”—*Revelation 21:4*.

**This brief summary has been provided to fully clarify all aspects of God's judgment of the world—and to vindicate His character** for the manner in which He does it! Each aspect of the threefold sequence of judgment is done in such a way that everyone in the universe will fully understand the issues—and know for a certainty that everyone had a chance to inherit eternal life, and why some will be eternally blotted out of existence.

The **Investigative Judgment**, when completed, will reveal to angels and unfallen worlds why each of the redeemed is saved. The **Sentencing Judgment** during the millennium will reveal to the redeemed, angels, and unfallen worlds why each of the wicked is lost. The **Executive Judgment** at the close of the millennium enables each of the wicked to under-

stand why, by his own choosing, he himself is lost.

#### MY COMMITMENT

Dear Father, how solemn the thought that we are living in the hour of special judgment! Oh, please help me to warn my loved ones and neighbors about this important truth, so they too can prepare their lives to meet Thee in peace. In Jesus's name I ask this. Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—We are going to view a wonderful collection of God-given truths which are found in the truth about the Sanctuary. It is a thrilling panorama of facts we need to know, in order to be able to better share this truth with others.

A Complete Evangelistic Sermon: Chapter Nineteen

# With Christ in the Sanctuary

A Journey That Will Change You

*This chapter is from a document written by the present writer over forty-five years ago, after several months of careful study into the message of the Inspired Writings on this subject. It explains how each one of us may enter the Sanctuary Experience:*

**Soon the newspapers, television, and the endless details of life will pass away. But the story here before you is eternal; and you will live forever with it, if it is in your mind and in your daily experience.** All around us are the artificials of man. But here is revealed the reality of God's plan for your life. Come, give everything you have to it. **Follow along in the path of the Atonement; for it is the path of the Blood, shed and applied for your soul.**

**The call is to come, but the cry of the soul is "How do I come?" It is in the vivid lesson book of the Sanctuary that we learn how to come.** Read the story on your knees with crying and repentance. See what your sins have done to Jesus, and what He is doing for you. As you do so, the Spirit will begin the work to mold and remake you into the image of God.

## TO THE ALTAR

**Outside of the gate that opens into the court of the sanctuary is spiritual death.** Those who choose to remain there have no hope of eternal life. They are bound by their lusts, in a prison house of sin. Millions are there.

From where we stand, we cannot see inside of the court. The white linen fence and gate are slightly higher than the large *Altar of Burnt Offering* on the other side. Yet, as we look, we see a man appear above and beyond the fence and gate. He has climbed the ramp and is standing on the outer walkway of the altar. Before our eyes we see a "lamb as it had been slain" (*Revelation 5:6*)—freshly slain—lifted up above the high altar. As we look, we sense that it is because of us that it is there; and, **feeling deeply our sinfulness and filthiness, we are drawn to enter** (*John 3:14-15; 12:32; Jeremiah 31:3*). In brokenness of heart at the sight, **we run through the gate which has been provided** (*John 10:7; 14:6*)—the *gate of repentance*.

**We come before the large altar, representing**

**the immense sacrifice it took to bring us there. We behold Christ, the Lamb of God**—oppressed, afflicted, smitten of men, led to the slaughter for us (*Isa 53:7, 4*). As we look, **we see not the ramp before us, leading up to an earthly altar, but rather, a high hill—the high hill of Golgotha—and the Man taken to its summit by the surging, shouting crowd.** Without resistance He is nailed to the wood. We behold Him—lifted up with the cross as it is heavily thrust into the hole prepared for it, and there He suffers the price of sin on our behalf.

The truth dawns: **It is not His cross. He is dying on another man's cross—a murderer's cross. It is my cross.** "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." *John 15:13*. The vastness, the depth of that love, like a great panorama lies before us; and our self-righteousness, our pride of opinion, our strife for the supremacy crumbles within us. We behold Him—"the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (*John 1:29*), and we choke up at the sight. He died for me (*1 Peter 2:24*)—and we fall down and worship Him. **We fall down and accept Him as our personal Saviour from sin** (*1 John 3:16*). We lay down and die to self, with Him (*Colossians 3:3; Galatians 5:24*).

**Near the Altar is the Laver of water representing the washing of regeneration**—of justification from sin—done at the cross (*Romans 6:4; Galatians 2:20; Luke 9:24; 2 Timothy 2:11; Colossians 2:20; Romans 6:6*). Before entering the sanctuary, we are washed in the blood of Christ.

**This washing is represented initially by baptism** (*Matthew 28:19; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-5*) **and, thereafter, in the ordinance of foot washing** (*John 13:4-12, 13-17*) which precedes the communion service (*1 Corinthians 11:27-28; John 13:12-18; etc.*)—three ordinances expressly commanded to us by Jesus Himself. We can thank God for them—each one is given to enrich and deepen our experience.

## INTO THE SANCTUARY

**Here in the Outer Court of the sanctuary, we have experienced the new birth.** We have been justified by faith. Now walking in newness of life we must continue to follow Jesus (*Romans 6:2; 1 Peter 2:21; John 10:27; 12:26*). If we do not, we will return to the outer darkness of Satan's dominion (*Matthew 12:43-45*). **We must daily follow Him to the special place where He has gone** (*Colossians 3:1*). Having risen from the dead, Jesus has ascended to the Sanctuary in heaven. Within it is the holy Presence of the Father. How can we, how dare we, enter? Thank God, it is done for us by virtue of

the blood (*Ephesians 2:6*).

**Jesus, our High Priest, ministers on our behalf before the Father in the Sanctuary, that we who have been born anew in Christ might daily walk with Him and grow up more and more into His fullness** (*Hebrews 2:17-18; 8:1-2*). He ministers before the Father in order to impart His Holy Spirit to us (*John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26; 16:5-16*), and to supply our every need and sanctify us as we, by faith, continue looking to Him and relying upon the merits of His intercession (*Hebrews 4:14-16*). **Our need of His intercession is constant. The work of Christ in applying the atoning blood in heaven is as important as His work to provide it on the cross.**

#### WITHIN THE HOLY PLACE

Having passed the first veil of the sanctuary, we stand within the first apartment. On our right is the golden *Table of Shewbread*, containing twelve loaves of bread. Jesus takes us by the hand and leads us before it. **The food of the world perishes with the using** (*John 6:27*). It is deceitful (*Proverbs 23:2-3*) and unsatisfying (*Isaiah 55:2*), like empty husks (*Luke 15:16*) and dry ashes (*Isaiah 44:20*). But **the bread that God gives is nourishing—eternally nourishing.**

Our great danger, now that we are within the Sanctuary, is to forget the miserable existence outside the gate and, through lust or neglect, return to our former sins. The daily trials are given as continual reminders to flee to God through His Word for refuge—for living bread (*Deuteronomy 8:3*), the “Bread of heaven” (*Psalms 105:40*), which He alone can feed us with.

**The Word of God—the Bible, God’s Inspired Writings—is this bread of heaven** (*Job 23:12; Jeremiah 15:16; Psalm 119:103*), which we receive as we humbly, prayerfully study His Word. It is through the Bible that we read and partake of Jesus Christ, the Living Word (*John 6:35, 56-58; 6:63; 14:15, 23; Revelation 3:8*).

**In the earthly sanctuary, each Sabbath this shewbread was renewed.** Each Sabbath we today are, above every other time, to partake of a special communion with God.

**Each day those ministering in the sanctuary ate of the shewbread.** Morning by morning we are to open our Bible in sincerity and humility of heart, and to pray for “our daily bread” (*Matthew 6:11*); and morning by morning God will give it. Each meal will vary; but all will be feasts—filled with new lessons regarding our duties for that day, new glimpses of God’s insights into the loveliness of Christ our Righteousness.

From the shewbread, **Jesus leads us to the golden Altar of Incense that stands before the second veil.** The golden bowl of incense, resting on top, is continually sending up smoke. This smoking incense represents our prayers (*Psalms 141:1-2; Revelation 5:8*) and it also represents the righteous merits of Jesus that must mingle with them, that they may be acceptable before the Father (*Revelation 8:3:4*). The text just referred to shows that **the incense of Jesus’ intercession goes up with the prayers of the saints, not in place of them. Prayer is the breath of every believer’s soul.** We must have it continually. The incense was placed on the altar every morning and evening (*Exodus 30:7-8*), and the flame from it burned continually. We are, in a special sense, to come alone, and with our families, to God in prayer every morning and evening, that throughout the day our hearts may be continually ascending to God in a spirit of prayer as we go about our duties.

From the Golden Altar, **Jesus leads us to the Golden Candlestick.** This is a lampstand with seven branches, each branch having a flame of fire at the top. Jesus is the vine; we are the branches (*John 15:5*). **From Him the golden oil, representing the Holy Spirit, flows to each individual believer. Having passed through us, it burns with a bright flame, giving light to all around us** (*John 5:35*). We were not made to be bottles for the Holy Spirit to merely enter and burn unseen within. We are made and dedicated, by Jesus, to be channels for the Spirit to flow through. **Only as we witness to our faith before others can we be burning, shining lights.** Jesus is the light of the world (*John 8:12; 1:9*). In His face shines “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God” (*2 Corinthians 4:6*). As we look unto Him, He imparts that knowledge to us through His Spirit, and we also shine (*Psalms 34:5; 2 Corinthians 3:18*). We must daily beware of allowing our faces to become “veiled”—failing to witness to our faith—through “embarrassment” of Jesus, or neglect, or preoccupation with other matters. To do so turns the light into darkness (*Matthew 6:23; John 1:5; 3:19; Deuteronomy 28:29; 1 John 1:6*).

#### A CONTINUAL EXPERIENCE

**The Outer Court and First Apartment represent the Daily Service—our daily experience in Christ. Each day this experience must be renewed.** The walk, carried on by faith throughout the day (*2 Corinthians 5:7; Jeremiah 10:23*), must begin anew each morning. And where do we begin? **We begin where we first found Him—at the gate of humiliation,** heart sorrow for our part in Calvary’s agony and deep repentance of soul,—at the altar of

death to self (*Colossians 2:6; 2 Corinthians 4:11*). Speaking of his own experience, Paul said, “I die daily” (*1 Corinthians 15:31*). Paul’s experience is to be our experience. The old song well-describes it: “*The way of the cross leads home.*” There is no other way. There are few who die daily, but they miss much because of it.

**Each morning, in abject humiliation and sorrow for what our sins have cost Jesus, self is to die, and God’s plans and His glory are to be made supreme.** And the walk begins anew—not because we “feel” so, but because God’s Word says so. The condition of surrender, death, and obedience has been met. Now **we are to Ask, Believe, and Claim whatever Bible promise is needed to meet the day’s necessities**—three steps, as simple as “ABC.” —*Ask* specifically for what you really need and for that which He has promised, in the Word, to provide; *believe* that the gift is in the promise, and that you have already received it; then *Claim* it—go about your work, believing the request is already yours, and use it. —The promise already imparted will be realized when it is most needed.

**Not one promise of God has ever failed for His faithful, obedient children** (*1 Kings 8:56*), and none ever will. We are to be fully persuaded that what He has promised, in Scripture, He is fully able to perform (*Romans 4:21*). **If the conditions are met (repentance, surrender, acceptance, faith, and obedience), the promises can never fail;** for upon them are staked His very honor and the fulfillment of His plan to remove sin from our lives (*2 Peter 1:4*).

**Each day we are to follow Jesus in the Sanctuary, as we partake of the Bread in Bible study, the Incense in earnest prayer, and the Oil in witnessing to our faith** in Jesus, our High Priest. **Day by day God will speak to us through His Word, we will speak to Him in prayer, and He will speak through us to others through our daily witness.** Day by day Jesus will go before us (*John 10:3-4*), and His Spirit will be imparted to guide our every step (*Isaiah 30:21*). Day by day the walk will grow closer; the experience will deepen.

#### GOING WHERE JESUS IS NOW

Within the *Outer Court* and the *First Apartment*, or *Holy Place*, occurs the *Daily Service*. But, **according to Scripture** (*Daniel 8:14; 9:24-27; Hebrews 9:3-7*), **Jesus entered the Second Apartment, or Most Holy Place, in 1844 to make the final cleansing of the Day of Atonement** (*Leviticus 16*). **We are now, in a very special sense, to enter this apartment and the experience of that Day.**

Beyond the second veil is the *Most Holy Place*. Within it is a small chest covered with solid gold.

This is called the **Ark of the Covenant**; for within it is the basis of God’s covenant with mankind (*Deuteronomy 4:13*)—the **stone tables engraved with the Moral Law**, the foundation of God’s throne and government, and the standard in the Judgment.

The golden **Mercy Seat** is a gold slab covering the top of the ark. Above the Mercy Seat is the **Shekinah Presence** of God with the covering **Cherubim**, one on either side (*Hebrews 9:1-5*). Within the ark is the golden *pot of manna*, *Aaron’s rod that budded*, and the *two tables of stone*—the *Ten Commandments*—written with the finger of God. Before the ark, Jesus stands clothed in the white mediatorial robe worn on the Day of Atonement, with the **golden censer** in His hand.

Until the atonement is completed, **Jesus continues His intercession on behalf of His people, which He previously carried on in the first apartment. But, now, in addition, He has begun the special final examination and cleansing in the second apartment.** We are today, by faith and earnest prayer, to follow Jesus in His work in this apartment.

**The experience of the first apartment is also to be found within the Holy of Holies.** The **manna** is the “bread of heaven” (*Psalms 105:40*); and, like the shewbread, it represents Jesus, “the bread which came down from heaven” (*John 6:49-51*) and His Word, the Bible. We are, at this time, to seek to live by “the hidden manna” of the Sanctuary (*Revelation 2:17*).

The prayers and Jesus’ continual intercession is represented by the Altar of Incense in the first apartment and the **golden censer**, with its smoking incense in Jesus’ hand, in the second apartment.

The lamps that shone in the first apartment and **Aaron’s rod** which budded and bore fruit (*Numbers 17*), within the second apartment, both represent the power of God’s Spirit working in us to fulfill our purpose of existence—to shine, to bear fruit, to glorify God by our every word and action.

**Thus the experience of the Holy Place is to be continued today in the Most Holy Place in heaven, where Christ is now carrying on a special Judgment-Hour work.**

The Covering Cherubim above and on either side of the ark are looking downward toward the golden mercy seat (*Exodus 25:20*). **Soon, upon the mercy seat, the atonement is to be completed** (*Leviticus 16:15*), **as the blood of Jesus is sprinkled** (*Hebrews 9:23; 12:24; 1 Peter 1:2*) upon it.

**By this final second apartment application of the blood provided at Calvary, the records of the Sanctuary will forever be cleansed from sin.** That act will symbolize the fact that, **through the**

**enabling grace of Christ, God's people on earth have put away sin from their lives.** These are the "things the angels desire to look into" (*1 Peter 1:12*). They, together with the entire universe, are giving their deepest interest to this concluding work of grace. We also are to give it our deepest attention and our most earnest prayers (*Leviticus 16:29-30*).

**But we must do more than pray—we must confess Him (speak of Him) to others.** Jesus, as our priest, is now standing before the Father and before all the angels, confessing the names of His faithful people and making intercession for them. But who receives this confession? those only who confess Him before others (*Matthew 10:32-33; 12:37; Romans 10:9; 1 John 2:23; 4:15; Luke 12:8*). Our acknowledgment—the confession of our sinfulness to Jesus and our grateful acceptance of His Righteousness must be continual. Our witness—the confession of our faith before others and our joyful sharing of the wonderful news of how others also may receive that Righteousness—must also be continual.

#### THE FULLNESS OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

**Within the Ark of the Covenant is to be found the basis of the everlasting covenant** between God and man—the Ten Commandments (*Deuteronomy 4:13; 5:2-3; Exodus 34:28; Hebrews 8*). **There is only one "Everlasting Covenant" between God and mankind—it is God's agreement, if we will fully cooperate, to take sin out of our lives.** Israel broke this covenant by trying to obey the law by themselves rather than through the imputed Righteousness of Christ. They thus made a worthless "old covenant" experience of it. The fault was with them (*Hebrews 8:8*). On God's side, there is only one covenant—the everlasting covenant of redemption. But men have tried to meet it wrongly—through their own efforts—righteousness by works—the *Old Covenant* experience.

But as long as Jesus continues mediating for us in the heavenly Sanctuary, this covenant agreement can be entered into and fulfilled in our lives. It is done through the New Covenant relationship to God, which is called *Righteousness by Faith* in the blood of Christ. The word "righteousness" means "right doing," obedient doing. **Righteousness means enabled obedience, through the empowering grace of Christ, to all that God requires.** Jesus is the Mediator of this better covenant, which is based upon better promises—God's promises, not the people's (*Exodus 19:5-8; 24:3, 7; Hebrews 8:1, 5-10*).

**"Without Me, ye can do nothing," Jesus said** (*John 15:5*). Never forget it. It is only as we cling,

moment by moment, to Jesus our intercessor (as the branch clings to the vine; *John 15:5*) that we can do any right thing. We can "do all things through Christ which strengtheneth" us (*Philippians 4:13*). There is no other way that we can do anything good.

**Beneath the throne of God is His Moral Law—the measure of all right doing** (*Romans 3:19-20; 7:7; James 1:22-25*), the basis of His covenant with man (*Deuteronomy 4:13; Hebrews 8:6-10*), and the standard of the Judgment (*Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; James 2:10-12*). Of ourselves we cannot obey this law. But that which we cannot do for ourselves, God can do for us "through the blood of the everlasting covenant" (*Hebrews 13:20*), as we humbly submit to His control. **He will write this law upon the heart of everyone willing to be drawn to a full surrender, at the foot of the cross, and obedience to His every word.** Day by day, as we come to our Mediator, He will write it upon our hearts and, through His grace, empower us to resist lust, theft, idolatry, vice, covetousness, and Sabbath breaking.

**Why did Jesus have to die on Calvary? He died to meet the demands of the law and to destroy sin.** Some think that He died to meet the demands of sin and to destroy the law, but not so. **It is sin in the sinner that seeks to destroy the law, for sin is the attempt to destroy law** (*1 John 3:4*). **If the law could have been changed in the slightest, to meet man in his fallen condition, then Christ would not have had to die.** We can understand this from the very nature of sin itself. Consider the following texts carefully: "Sin is the transgression of the law." *1 John 3:4*. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." *Romans 3:20*. Sin is lawbreaking; sin brings death. Christ came, not to be a lawbreaker, but to destroy sin by dying in our place—and by His merits imparting to us enabling grace to obey the law as He did while on earth.

**Jesus seeks to uphold the law more than anyone who has ever lived on this earth. He died not to abolish the law, but because it could not be abolished,** without destroying the character of God Himself! The law tells us what God is like, and was made by a God whose moral nature does not change (*Malachi 3:6; James 1:17; Numbers 23:19-20; Psalm 33:11*). That Moral Law will also never change, for it is eternal (*Psalm 119:152; 89:34; 111:7-8; Matthew 5:17-19; Ecclesiastes 3:14*).

**The fact that Jesus can do that which the sacrifice of animals could never do is strikingly portrayed in the cessation of the "ordinances" at Calvary.** *Ephesians 2:15* speaks of these ordinances that were abolished at the cross. Some think that this was the Moral Law! If this were so, then vice, theft, perjury, murder, and idolatry would all

be wholesome Christian activities today. In reality, **the ordinances that came to their end were the sacrificial laws that prefigured the death of Christ** (*Hebrews 10:1-5*). The seventy-week prophecy, mentioned earlier, predicted that the “sacrifices” would, in the eyes of God, cease to have meaning at the death of the Messiah (*Daniel 9:27*).

The principles of atonement by blood, and the way in which Christ would carry it out were given by God and changeless. But the actual animal sacrifices themselves and the work in the earthly sanctuary no longer had any value following the death of His Son—and so they were made obsolete—done away with—at the cross (*Hebrews 7:24-27; Matthew 27:50-51*). **The entire book of Hebrews was written to prove that Christ’s death ended the Jewish sacrifices.**

We have seen that **the Law is the great standard of the Judgment** (*Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; James 2:10-12; Psalm 96:13; 119:142-146*). **This is so because it is the only means by which we can identify sin** (*1 John 3:4; Romans 3:20; Romans 7:7*). The law reveals sin and brings guilt and condemnation (*Romans 3:19*), and thus acts as a spiritual mirror to show us our sinful nature (*James 1:22-25*) and lead us to Christ (*Galatians 3:24*), who alone can take the sin out of our lives.

God uses the law to identify and convict of sin. But it is only the mirror (*James 1:22-25*), not the soap. It can’t forgive or justify us (*Romans 3:20*). It cannot keep us from sin or sanctify us (*Gal. 3:21*).

**While the law can point out sin—it cannot remove it. Only Jesus can forgive our sins** (*Acts 13:38-39; Matthew 1:21*). **Only He can cleanse us, write the law upon our hearts, and give us power to obey it** (*Hebrews 8:10*). It is written upon our hearts because, by constantly relying upon Him, *Jesus is in our hearts*, and He enables us to keep it perfectly (*Psalm 119:9-11*). In the Bible, the “heart” is the symbol of the “mind.” **Through the atonement, the law becomes the way we naturally live—no longer lawbreakers, but obedient—like Jesus**, because we are now living “in Christ.”

**Looking upon the moral code and its ten holy rules, we see our sin-hardened hearts. Looking upon Jesus, hanging upon Calvary’s cross in our stead, our sinful hearts are broken. Looking upon the law, we see our carnal natures and the standard that must be reached. Looking upon Jesus we want to reach it. This is the story of redemption.**

It is the blood of Jesus alone that can bring us to God. This blood must finally be placed on the mercy seat because beneath it are the Ten Commandments which we have transgressed. **The Atonement can-**

**not be completed until the blood, representing the poured-out life of Jesus, is brought before the Moral Code of Ten Commandments which men have broken** (*Leviticus 16:15*).

**The Moral Law, resting beneath the Presence of God** (*Exodus 25:16; 31:18; 25:17-22*), **is the foundation of the blood covenant** (*Exodus 24; Hebrews 8*). **Because it is beneath His throne, it is also the foundation of His moral government.** It represents God, His holiness, His sinlessness. **Rather than seeking to lower the standard by destroying the Law, the Plan of Redemption preserves** it by granting to us, through the merits of Christ’s sacrifice, the indwelling of His own Righteousness—His own attitude of loving obedience to His Father’s commandments (*John 15:10*).

**The mercy of grace meets the justice of the Law at the mercy seat as the drops of Jesus’ blood are sprinkled upon it. This is the Atonement**—the plan to redeem us from sin, by bringing together mercy and justice—without destroying either mercy or justice (*Psalm 85:10; 89:14*).

#### THE FINAL EXPERIENCE

**On the Day of Atonement, the people were to gather at the sanctuary** and afflict their souls as the high priest went in before the mercy seat on their behalf (*Leviticus 16:29-31*). **As we, today, gather, by faith, at the entrance of the Sanctuary and seek, by faith, to follow Him in His work, Jesus, our High Priest, stands for us before the golden mercy seat.**

The records of God’s people are being examined, to see who, by sincere repentance and entire acceptance of God’s provision for their salvation, are preparing themselves for its sentence. **Soon, by this final sprinkling of the blood, the sanctuary which contains the records of sin will be cleansed. That will occur because God’s people, who are responsible for the sins blotted out of the records in heaven, have on earth already put them away!** (*Leviticus 16:29-34; Daniel 8:14; Malachi 3:1-3*).

Every Jew well knew that the yearly Day of Atonement represented the great final Day of Judgment. For them, it was the most solemn day in the year.

Jesus is now examining the books of record in the Sanctuary, to determine who will receive the final cleansing and compose the subjects of His Kingdom of Glory. Then, **following this cleansing, He will take off His priestly robes, announce the solemn decree, that human probation is closed,—and then return for His people** (*Revelation 22:11-12*).

**The Bible clearly shows that the Investigative Judgment** (*Daniel 7:9-11, 26*) **must precede His**

**Second Coming** to earth for His people (*Daniel* 7:13-14, 27) and the Executive Judgment upon the wicked (*Jude* 14-15). The investigative examination must, of necessity, precede His Second Coming when He shall “reward every man according to his works” (*Matthew* 16:27; *Revelation* 22:12), and “execute upon them the judgment written” (*Psalms* 149:9).

**“We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.”** *2 Corinthians* 5:10. **We are now to come, and to send our sins beforehand to judgment—before it passes to our names.** “Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.” *1 Timothy* 5:24. We are not to wait until later to begin this work. “Later” may never come, for we could suddenly die tomorrow. The only time given us in which to act is now—today (*Hebrews* 3:7-8; *Deuteronomy* 30:15, 19; *Joshua* 24:15; *1 Kings* 18:21). **We must now put away our sins; we must now send them “beforehand” to judgment,—or standing unconfessed, unforsaken, upon the records in that great day, they will condemn us.**

**We are to come boldly to the throne** (*1 John* 4:17; *Hebrews* 10:19-25; 6:18-20; 4:14-16). We are to come—trusting not in our own goodness, but in His mercies. We are to come—not because of any worthiness on our part, but because of our great need. We must come—now.

**Nothing is hidden—for indeed, nothing can be** (*Psalms* 90:8; *Luke* 12:2). All is to be laid open before Jesus. Tell Him everything; lay it all before Him (*Psalms* 54:1-4). **Tell Him that you give sin up. Ask Him to take it away** (*Psalms* 51:7-17), and give you enabling strength to obey (*Psalms* 119:9-11). Jacob earnestly pleaded, “I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me” (*Genesis* 32:26). Let this be your prayer. Cling to Him as did Jacob—as your only hope. Plead for forgiveness of sin and strength to be an overcomer. Plead for the final cleansing from sin.

Christ has fabulous promises of what He will do for those who, in His strength, resist sin and are overcomers (*Revelation* 2:7, 11, 17; 2:26; 3:5, 12, 21; 21:7). Let us claim everyone of those promises!

**“Every man’s judgment cometh from the Lord”** (*Proverbs* 29:26)—**but we decide what it shall be!** The decisions of heaven will be determined by the decisions of our hearts. The decisions of our hearts will be determined by that upon which our interests are the most earnestly fastened. Minds centered upon the world will be condemned with the world. Minds centered on the Atonement will be cleansed by the Atonement. This is the hour to watch and pray.

This is the hour to plead with God (*Jeremiah* 12:1). We are to plead that, in the judgment, we may be covered by His righteousness (*Psalms* 35:24). Pray

and wait for the promised blessing (*Isaiah* 30:18; *Psalms* 94:12-15; *Isaiah* 1:16-19, 25-28; *Hebrews* 10:19-39), remembering that it is by faith that we enter (*Hebrews* 10:35-12:4; *Hebrews* 3-4).

**God is holy—“dwelling in light unapproachable”**—and of ourselves, we dare not come near Him, lest we be destroyed by the glory of His Presence (*2 Thessalonians* 2:8). **But, through Jesus, we can come** (*John* 10:9; *Romans* 5:2; *Ephesians* 2:18; 3:12; *Revelation* 3:8). He is our “Forerunner”—He has gone before us; and, on the basis of our hope in Him, we are to follow after (*Hebrews* 6:18-20). He was Man—tempted in all points like as we; He understands and sympathizes with all of our needs. He is also God,—and has been given all power in heaven and earth. He can forgive and give us power to overcome (*Matthew* 28:18; *Hebrews* 2:9-18; 4:14-16).

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. **Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.**” *Hebrews* 4:15-16.

**“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.** For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.” *Hebrews* 7:25-26.

**“And they sung as it were a new song before the throne . . . These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.** These were redeemed from among men.” *Revelation* 14:3-4. (See also *Revelation* 15:2; 12:11, 17; 14:12, 14; 22:2-14; 7:14-17; 21:1-7, 23-27; 22:1-7, 17.)

Come now to your God, come now to your Priest, come now to your Judge,—come now to your Lamb. Come—now—to the blood of the Covenant, the blood of sprinkling.

—From Part Two of *The Inexpressible Gift*

## MY COMMITMENT

Kind Father, I am so thankful that every part of the Sanctuary Truth points to Jesus and the great plan of salvation! Help me to be submissive, day by day, so these truths can be written on my soul. I want to live with Thee forever in heaven. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—It is a solemn fact that God has a moral law which has never been abolished, and never will be. It has been in force all through the Bible, and continues to be the moral code for all mankind today.

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— PART FIVE —

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**CHRIST'S MORAL LAW**

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*A Complete Evangelistic Sermon: Chapter Twenty*

# Heaven's Law for Mankind

*Obedience by Faith in Christ*

## IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

**A woman married a man whom she did not love.** He made her get up every morning at five o'clock, cook his breakfast, and serve it at six sharp. He made her wait on him, was exacting in his demands on her time. Her life was made miserable trying to satisfy him.

**After a few years, he died and she married again. This time she married a man whom she really loved.** One day while clearing out some old papers, she came across the strict set of rules her former husband had written out for her to obey. Looking down through them, *she discovered that she was actually doing all of them now!* Then she realized that she was doing them all because of her deep love for the one to whom she was married.

**It is not difficult to serve God and obey His laws when we really love Him.**

**According to the Bible, God is a king**—the “king of nations” (*Jeremiah 10:10*). With His throne in the heavens, He is also the king of the universe “and His kingdom ruleth over all” (*Psalms 103:19*). “He removeth kings, and setteth up kings” (*Daniel 2:21*).

**God shares this rulership with Christ.** We are told about Christ, that “the government shall be upon His shoulder” (*Isaiah 9:6*). The last book in the Bible pictures Him coming as “King of kings, and Lord of lords” (*Revelation 19:16*).

**At that time He shall “set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed:** and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever” (*Daniel 2:44*).

## GOD'S GOVERNMENT HAS LAWS

**God, who “ruleth over all,” has a kingdom based on law.** Without laws, everything would soon become chaotic, with each person a law unto himself.

**Not even earthly governments can exist with-**

**out laws.** It is one of the greatest tragedies of our time, that so many teach that Christ died to abolish the moral law of Ten Commandments. The truth is that **Christ died (1) to vindicate God's just and holy law, and (2) to enable us by His grace to obey it.**

Belief in the importance of good laws, and obedience to them, is the very foundation of human society. Without this no people can be truly peaceful and happy. ***We can be thankful that in Heaven's government, there are laws!***

“The Lord is our judge, **the Lord is our lawgiver,** the Lord is our king.”—*Isaiah 33:22*.

“**There is one lawgiver,** who is able to save and to destroy.”—*James 4:12*.

**God's law tells what He is like.** It describes His character, showing that He is pure and holy.

“**Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.**”—*Romans 7:12*.

**His law is as stable and enduring as His character.** “For I am the Lord, I change not.” *Malachi 3:6*.

“**All His commandments are sure. They stand fast forever and ever,** and are done in truth and uprightness.”—*Psalms 111:7-8*.

**The perfection of God's law is the proof of its divine origin.**

“**The law of the Lord is perfect,** converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: **the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.**”—*Psalms 19:7-8*.

“And knowest His will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law.”—*Romans 2:18*.

“Friends and foes alike acknowledge that the Ten Commandments are the basis of our civilization.”—*James D. Rankin*.

**Here is a statement from a Lutheran publication about the perfection of God's law:**

“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” *Psalms 19:7*. Is there such a thing as a perfect law? Everything that comes from God is perfect . . . **In a very real sense the law of God is the manifestation of the nature of the Lord. It could no more be imperfect than He is.**”—*Augsburg Sunday School Teacher, August 1937, p. 483*.

## GOD'S LAW IS THE STANDARD IN THE JUDGMENT

**It is urgent that, through the enabling strength which Christ offers us, that we live clean, godly lives in accordance with God's holy Ten Commandment law. For it will be the law book in the Judgment.**

“**Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for**

**this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment,** with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”—*Ecclesiastes 12:13-14*.

**“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.** For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. **So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.**”—*James 2:10-12*.

#### NO SIN WHERE THERE IS NO LAW

**If it were possible for God’s law to be abolished, there would be no definition of what is sinful.** Any horrible thing could be done with impunity.

Where there is no law there is no sin, for **“sin is the transgression of the law”** (1 John 3:4). It tells us what is sinful. **“For by the law is the knowledge of sin.”** Romans 3:20. Therefore, in the strength which Christ offers us, He wants us to live clean, godly lives.

“Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure. **Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.**”—1 John 3:3-4.

#### THE LAW FROM ADAM TO ABRAHAM

**Adam knew the principles of God’s law, otherwise his disobedience could not be considered sinful. This is because “where no law is, there is no transgression [sin]”** (Romans 4:15).

“For until the law [was written on stone on Mount Sinai] sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.”—*Romans 5:13*.

**The fact that, before the law was given at Sinai, God recognized men’s disobedience to be sinful—is conclusive proof that the law existed before it was spoken on that mountain.** So, since Adam sinned, he transgressed the law of God.

**“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”**—*Romans 5:12*.

“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.”—*Romans 5:19*.

**The Bible teaches that men are not held accountable for sin when no law exists, and also that everyone born into this world is under God’s law.**

**“Sin is not imputed when there is no law.”** Romans 5:13. But Adam was counted as a sinner, because “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23), and “death reigned from Adam to Moses” (Romans 5:14). Paul sums it up when he says, **“So death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned”** (Romans 5:12).

The expression in Romans 5:13, “Until the law sin was in the world,” means “prior to the giving of the *written* law on Mount Sinai, sin was in our world.”

God said that Adam’s son, Cain, had sinned (*Genesis 4:6-7*). That which Cain did was evil (1 John 3:12). Noah and Lot lived among lawbreaking men who were punished for their sins (2 Peter 2:4-8). “The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.” *Genesis 13:13*. They did “unlawful deeds” (2 Peter 2:7-8). **So there was a standard which defined right and wrong back then. God’s law was in existence, and governed every human being.**

**John Wesley was faithful to always teach the importance of obedience to God’s moral law.**

**“As he a Methodist loves God, so he keeps His commandments;** not only some, or most of them, but all, from the least to the greatest. He is not content to ‘keep the whole law, and offend in one point;’ but has, in all points, ‘a conscience void of offense towards God and towards man.’ ”—*John Wesley, The Character of a Methodist, in Works, Vol. 8, p. 344*.

#### THE LAW FROM ABRAHAM TO EGYPT

**God called Abraham out to represent Him and give an example of obedience to His laws.** Abraham could do this because He knew God’s laws.

**“Because that Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.”**—*Genesis 26:5*.

**Abraham was selected because he obeyed whatever God asked him to do.**

“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.”—*Hebrews 11:8*.

The promise was made to Abraham that, **through his example of obedience, everyone on earth could be helped**—and he would be the ancestor of the coming Messiah. Whoever wished to, could also become an obedient child of God.

“Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him . . . **For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord,** to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.”—*Genesis 18:18-19*.

“Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee:

“And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee,

and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”—*Genesis 12:1-3*.

The promises to Abraham were not made to the Jews alone, but to all who would submit humbly to the rule of the true God and obey His requirements.

“If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”—*Galatians 3:29*.

**God blessed Joseph in Egypt because, determining to remain obedient to God, he refused to sin.** When tempted, he said, “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (*Genesis 39:9*).

**While in bondage to the Egyptians, the Israelites were punished for trying to keep the fourth of the Ten Commandments,** which was God’s command that they keep the seventh-day Sabbath holy.

“And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens.”—*Exodus 5:4-5*.

Angered by this, Pharaoh ordered that their taskmasters make their work even harder, so they would not be able to get it all done in six days each week (*verses 6-9*).

O.C.S. Wallace, in his book, *What Baptists Believe* (p. 80), wrote this:

“In the moral government of the universe God acts in harmony with a rule . . . We cannot conceive of an age when the moral government of the universe shall be changed, because **we cannot conceive of God becoming different morally from what He is now and ever has been . . . This Law of God is holy as He Himself is holy . . . It is a universal law . . . The Law of God is full of the love of God.**”

#### THE LAW FROM EGYPT TO SINAI

**The Bible specifically tells us that God brought the Israelites out of Egypt so they could faithfully, without hindrance, keep His laws.**

“He brought forth His people with joy, and His chosen with gladness: And gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labour of the people; **that they might observe His statutes, and keep His laws.**”—*Psalms 105:43-45*.

**When Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, they already knew God’s law. In Exodus 16, four chapters before Mount Sinai, they were tested on whether they would obey the Sabbath commandment, which they already knew.**

“And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, **Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord:** bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until

the morning.

“And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that today; for **today is a Sabbath unto the Lord:** today ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none.”—*Exodus 16:23-26*.

When some went out to gather manna on the Sabbath, God said this:

**“How long refuse ye to keep My commandments and My laws?”**—*Exodus 16:28*.

**Even before receiving the law, spoken and written on tablets, at Mount Sinai (*Exodus 20:1-17; 24:12; 31:18*), Moses was already explaining God’s law to the people.**

“The people come unto me to inquire of God: When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and **I do make them know the statutes of God, and His laws.**”—*Exodus 18:15-16*.

Dwight Moody wrote in his book, *Weighed and Wanting*, p. 16:

“The people must be made to understand that **the ten commandments are still binding, and that there is a penalty attached to their violation.** The Sermon on the Mount did not blot out the ten commandments.”

#### THE LAW AT MOUNT SINAI

**At Mount Sinai, the Israelites entered into a solemn covenant that, in order to be God’s special people, they would obey His laws.**

“Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto Myself.

“Now therefore, **if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me** above all people: for all the earth is Mine: And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

“And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, **All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.**”—*Exodus 19:4-8*.

**God was deeply grateful that the people, that day, agreed to obey His moral law!** He knew that if they did not do so, they would perish in their sins.

“And the Lord heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken.

**“O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My command-**

**ments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!”—Deuteronomy 5:28-29.**

Prior to this time, the facts of Creation and the Fall, and the knowledge of God and His law had been handed down from father to son until this time, but not in written form.

**After the Ten Commandments were proclaimed by God from the top of Mount Sinai with His own voice** (*Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:4, 22-26*) to the assembled people below, in a very impressive ceremony (*Exodus 20*), **God wrote the law with His own finger on solid rock.**

“And He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.”—*Exodus 31:18*.

These stone tablets were broken by Moses when the Israelites sinned by worshiping a graven image (*Exodus 32:19*). Later God wrote them again (*Deuteronomy 10:4*).

**Of the 31,072 verses of Scripture that are in the Bible, only fifteen verses were written by God.** All the rest of the Bible, except these fifteen verses were written by men under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”—*2 Peter 1:21*.

This small portion of Scripture is so important that God Himself came down to this earth, spoke these words in tones of thunder, and then with His own divine finger wrote them on tables of stone. These fifteen verses are the Ten Commandments.

**Here are the TEN COMMANDMENTS, as God gave them to us on Mount Sinai:**

“And God spake all these words, saying,

“I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

[1] **“Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.**

[2] **Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them:** for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments.

[3] **“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain;** for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.

[4] **“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.** Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But **the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord**

**thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work,** thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

[5] **“Honour thy father and thy mother:** that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

[6] **“Thou shalt not kill.**

[7] **“Thou shalt not commit adultery.**

[8] **“Thou shalt not steal.**

[9] **“Thou shalt not bear false witness** against thy neighbour.

[10] **“Thou shalt not covet** thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s.”—*Exodus 20:1-17*.

**After the Ten Commandments were written down at Mount Sinai, the tables of stone were placed inside the ark of the covenant** (*Deuteronomy 10:2*), also called the ark of the testament or testimony (*Exodus 25:22; Revelation 11:19*). The ark was given these names because the law was God’s “testimony” to the people (*Exodus 31:18*). It was also God’s “covenant” with them (*Deuteronomy 5:1-21*).

**It is of the highest significance that this Ten Commandment law, which was the basis of God’s covenant with mankind, was placed in the ark of the covenant in the most holy place** (the second apartment) of the sanctuary. Above the ark, in which rested this law, the presence of God was manifested in the glory of the Shekinah. **The ark represented the foundation of God’s throne. That is why the Moral Law was placed inside it.** —*In this way, God taught the people the sacredness of these moral principles, and that they are the foundation of His government.*

**It is also very significant that it was on the mercy seat of the ark, above the law, that the high priest sprinkled the blood of atonement once in the year.**

“The wages of sin is death” (*Romans 6:23*), and “without shedding of blood is no remission” of sin (*Hebrews 9:22*). **The blood of the victim represented the blood of Christ, which was shed on Calvary—not to destroy God’s moral law—but to satisfy its demands so that by Christ’s grace, God’s humble, repentant, believing children could come to Him, be forgiven of their sins and strengthened to obey that law.**

There were also other statutes, the ceremonial

laws governing sacrifices which prefigured Christ's death, which God also gave to Moses. But they were only temporary, and ended at the death of Christ. These were only placed on the side of the ark—not within it with the eternal moral law (*Deuteronomy 31:24-26*).

Here is a nice summary statement by W.C. Proctor, a Bible scholar at the Moody Bible Institute:

**"We should not suppose that the Ten Commandments were new enactments when they were proclaimed from Sinai;** for, the Hebrew word *torah* [law] is used in such previous passages of the Old Testament as Genesis 26:5; Exodus 12:49; Genesis 35:2; Exodus 13:9; 16:28; 18:16, 20. [Genesis 2:3 and Exodus 16:22-30 for the fourth; Genesis 9:6, for the sixth; and Genesis 2:24 for the seventh.]

**"The decalogue, given to us in Exodus 20:3-17, may therefore be regarded as the full and solemn declaration of duties which had been revealed previously,** and this public enunciation took place under absolutely unique circumstances. We are told that 'the ten words' were spoken by God's own voice (*Exodus 20:1; Deuteronomy 5:4, 22-26*), and twice afterward 'written on tables of stone with the finger of God' (*Exodus 24:12; 31:18; 32:16; 34:1, 28; Deuteronomy 4:13; 5:22, 9-10; 10:1-4*), thus appealing alike to the ear and eye, **and emphasizing both their supreme importance and permanent obligation.**"—William C. Proctor, *Moody Bible Institute Monthly*, October 1933, p. 49.

**Someone set the Ten Commandments to verse:**

"Thou shalt have no more gods but Me,  
Before no idol bow the knee,  
Take not the name of God in vain,  
Nor dare the Sabbath to profane.  
Give both thy parents honor due,  
Take heed that thou no murder do.  
Abstain from words and deeds unclean;  
Nor steal, though thou be poor and mean;  
Nor make a willful lie, nor love it,  
What is thy neighbor's dare not covet."

**Several years before becoming president, Abraham Lincoln addressed a group of young people** in a church in Springfield, Illinois. Lincoln had earlier made a study of some of the different religions of the world, searching for a foundation which could guide men aright. He presented to this group of young people what he found to be the outstanding law of each religion, while pointing out flaws in each one. Then in summary, he said this:

"It seems to me that **nothing short of infinite wisdom could by any possibility have been devised and given to man this one excellent and perfect moral code: the Ten Commandments.** It is suited to men in all conditions of life, and summarizes all the duties they owe to their Creator, to themselves, and to their fellow men."

**William Jennings Bryan said it this way:**

"Sinai is inseparably connected with the Ten Commandments given by the Almighty for the guidance of humanity. **It is now the foundation of law for the entire civilized world.** Like the Lord's Prayer, in a few words it covers all the important relations of life."

#### THE LAW FROM MOSES TO CHRIST

**After God's people entered Canaan and settled there, they repeatedly rebelled against God's authority, and refused to obey His moral law. But there were faithful ones who, in their lives, drew close to God and carefully obeyed the Ten Commandments,** so they could be more like Him. *Here are some of their divinely inspired statements:*

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord."—*Psalm 119:1*.

**"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul:** the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes . . . **More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey** and the honeycomb. **Moreover by them is Thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.**"—*Psalm 19:7-8, 10-11*.

**"Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them.** Lord, I have hoped for Thy salvation, and done Thy commandments. My soul hath kept Thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly."—*Psalm 119:165-167*.

**"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do His commandments:** His praise endureth forever."—*Psalm 111:10*.

**But, tragically, those who refuse to obey God's holy law will eventually come to a miserable end.**

**"Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.** For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not His saints; they are preserved forever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever. The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment. **The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.**"—*Psalm 37:27-31*.

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. **But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night.** And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

**"The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.** Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners

in the congregation of the righteous. **For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.**”—*Psalm 1:1-6*.

**“O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.”**—*Isaiah 48:18*.

**“If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”**—*Isaiah 1:19-20*.

**“He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.”**—*Proverbs 28:9*.

**“I have written to him the great things of My law, but they were counted as a strange thing.”**—*Hosea 8:12*.

**Isaiah declared God’s law to be the divine test of all teaching.**

**“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.”**—*Isaiah 8:20*.

**The entire 119th psalm—the longest chapter in the Bible—is entirely about the law of God and what a blessing and help it is to us!**

In the *Baptist Church Manual*, Article 12, p. 54, we read:

**“We believe that the law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government; that it is holy, just, and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen man to fulfill its precepts arise entirely from their love of sin.”**

#### IN THE NEW TESTAMENT JESUS CHRIST AND THE LAW

**What did Jesus have to say about God’s law while He was here on earth? Did He obey it Himself? These are very important questions!**

**It was predicted that, when Christ came to earth, He would not only carefully obey God’s moral law, but would emphasize its importance.**

**“The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake; He will magnify the law, and make it honourable.”**—*Isaiah 42:21*.

**It was predicted that God’s law would be in Christ’s heart; in other words that He would carefully obey it.**

**“Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart.”**—*Isaiah 40:7-8*.

The Apostle Paul said it even more forcefully.

**“Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God.”**—*Hebrews 10:7*.

It should be mentioned here that this is the *true meaning* of the Bible promise that **God will write**

**the law on the heart of His faithful ones. That is, He will enable them by the grace of Christ to obey it.**

**“I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people.”**—*Jeremiah 31:33*.

**“I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people.”**—*Hebrews 8:10*.

**In the sermon on the mount, Christ declared that He had not come to abolish the law, but to give a perfect example of obeying it.**

Christ had spoken less than two minutes of His wonderful sermon on the mount, when He declared before the multitude:

**“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.**

**“For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”**—*Matthew 5:17-18*.

**What did Christ mean when He said, “fulfill”? Some people say that it meant that Christ came to earth to destroy God’s moral law. But that is not true! Christ did not come down here to abolish the moral principles we should live by! Instead, He came to give us, in His life, a perfect example of obedience to God’s Ten Commandment law and enabling grace to obey it ourselves.**

The word, “fulfill,” when used in relation to prophecy, means “to bring to pass,” as in: “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaias the prophet” (*Matthew 4:14*). In order to fulfill prophecy, Christ had to do what the prophets predicted. This He did, when He said in Nazareth, “This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears” (*Luke 4:21*).

**But when used in relation to God’s law, “fulfill” means “to obey it, perform it, act in accordance with it,” as in these passages:**

**“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”**—*Galatians 6:2*.

**“If ye fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well. But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.”**—*James 2:8-9*.

**To fulfill God’s moral law, Jesus had to obey its requirements.** This He did; for as He approached the hour of Gethsemane, He declared, **“I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love”** (*John 15:10*). **God could not love Christ if He was immoral!** But Christ obeyed the Ten Commandments. We know that He kept them with His whole heart, for God Himself testified of

Christ: "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity." *Hebrews 1:9*.

**In order to fulfill, that is to fill up, a full example of godly living,** Christ told John the Baptist to baptize Him as an example for us to follow.

"I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus **it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness**. Then he suffered Him. And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water."—*Matthew 3:14-16*.

In His teaching, **Christ magnified the law, making it apply not only to outward deeds but to inward thoughts** (*Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28*). In His life He fulfilled the law. Indeed, He was the living law. Speaking to His enemies, He asked, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" (*John 8:46*). Peter later said of Christ, that He "did no sin" (*1 Peter 2:22*).

Let us get it clear in our minds, **Christ died, not because He sinned, but we because we sinned. He died not to abolish the law, but to vindicate it and give us enabling strength to obey the law!**

In *Matthew 5:17-18*, quoted earlier, Jesus *did not say*, "I am not come to destroy the law, but to destroy it." The word for "destroy" in the Greek is *katalusai* ("to utterly destroy," as in *Matthew 26:61*). That Greek word is not used in *Matthew 5:17-18*.

Instead, Jesus said, **"I not come to destroy the law, but to fill up (provide you with) a perfect example of obeying it."** The Greek word in verses 17 and 18 is *pleroo*. **That same word is used in "that your joy may be full,"** that is, may be made richer, more abundant, in *1 John 1:4*: "These things write we unto you, **that your joy may be full.**" Here are other passages which also have *pleroo*, "to make more deep, intense, perfect":

"These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and **that your joy might be full.**"—*John 15:11*. (Other examples are in *John 16:24; John 17:13; 2 John 12*.)

**"Fulfill ye My joy,** that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."—*Philippians 2:2*.

**Pleroo is also used in regard to preaching more fully** (*Colossians 1:25*), **and obeying more fully** (*2 Corinthians 10:6*). It does not mean to stop preaching or stop obeying!

**In the sermon on the mount, Christ also declared that whoever does not obey this law will not be saved!** Here is the rest of that passage:

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

**"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these**

**least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least** in the kingdom of heaven: **but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great** in the kingdom of heaven."—*Matthew 5:17-19*.

**Jesus is here saying that the entire universe would have to be destroyed before the smallest part of God's moral law could be done away with!**

In His words, quoted above, **Christ gave a solemn warning to anyone who might tell others that they did not have to obey the Ten Commandments!** The phrase, "kingdom of heaven," as used in the book of Matthew, refers to all those who on earth accept Christ as their Saviour. But **God will consider those who disobey His law, and teach others to transgress it, to be the ones who will be on the bottom of the list—and ultimately discarded, and not later taken to Christ's heavenly kingdom.**

Christ reproved the Pharisees for requiring obedience to their man-made rules, as a way to avoid obeying God's laws. On one occasion, He told how the Pharisees taught the people how to avoid keeping the sixth commandment, in a way that would enrich the Pharisees! (*Matthew 15:3-6*). Christ then said this.

**"But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."**—*Matthew 15:9*.

**Christ unsparingly condemned those who claimed to be children of God, while refusing to obey God's commandments.**

**"Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.**

"Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; **but he that doeth the will of My Father** which is in heaven.

"Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: **depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.**"—*Matthew 7:19-23*.

When someone asked Christ what he must do to inherit eternal life, Christ replied,

**"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."**—*Matthew 19:17*.

But, along with this, **Christ was very clear about the fact that we must be united to Him by faith in order to do any good thing!** Apart from Christ, it is impossible to please God by our actions.

**"Abide in Me, and I in you.** As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in

him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for **without Me ye can do nothing.**

**"If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."**—*John 15:4-6.*

**No more soul-destroying doctrine could ever be inspired by Satan than that Christ, during His earthly life, set aside His Father's law and left man at liberty to violate it.**

Christ came to earth "to save His people from their sins" (*Matthew 1:21*),—not in their sins. Christ is "the power of God" (*1 Corinthians 1:24*), enabling us to live godly lives. It was His mission to take "away the sin of the world" (*John 1:29*). He will do it today for anyone who will come and submit to His authority.

**John Wesley (1703-1791) was a genuine Christian who combined both law and grace in his life.** Because of this, he gave the most powerful Christian witness of the 18th century. The founder of the Methodist Church, he wrote these words:

"The moral law, contained in the Ten Commandments, and enforced by the Prophets, He [Christ] did not take away. It was not the design of His coming to revoke any part of this . . . **Every part of this law must remain in force upon all mankind, and in all ages;** as not depending either on time or place, or any other circumstances liable to change, but on the nature of God, and the nature of man, and their unchangeable relation to each other."—*John Wesley, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount," Discourse 5, in Works, Vol. 5, pp. 311-312.*

#### THE APOSTLES AND GOD'S LAW

**What Paul wrote**—The Apostle Paul upheld God's moral law. He declared that the law was **holy, just, good, and spiritual** (*Romans 7:7, 12-14*). In strong language, he asserted that through faith "we establish the law" (*Romans 3:27-31*). Finally he testified in a Roman court at his own trial, "so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets" (*Acts 24:14*).

**It is a device of the devil to quote the apostles of Christ as being against the law of God.** Had Paul turned against the law of God, he himself would thereby have become a leader of apostasy, paving the way for the man of sin who was to "think to change times and laws" (*Daniel 7:25; see also 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4*).

**Paul declared that it is those who are evil who refuse to obey God's laws.**

"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because **the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not**

**subject to the law of God,** neither indeed can be."—*Romans 8:6-7.*

**Paul was called by God to proclaim the truth about Jesus Christ to the Gentiles;** that is, those who were not of the Jewish race.

"He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles."—*Acts 9:15.*

"I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."—*Acts 13:47.*

**Paul considered it his special work to bring Gentiles to faith in God and obedience to Him,** "to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed" (*Romans 15:18*), so they could live clean, godly lives.

Although he opposed the keeping of the ceremonial laws (since the death of Christ had abolished their significance), **Paul was very careful to teach his converts not to be lawless, as were the heathen. Godly living, good works, was what Paul urged on the believers.**

"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for He is faithful that promised. **And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.**"—*Hebrews 10:22-24.*

**To those who suggested, as many do today, that it would be all right to keep sinning and still be saved, Paul said that to do so, would mean they were still dead outside of Christ!**

"What shall we say then? **Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?** God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, **even so we also should walk in newness of life.**"—*Romans 6:1-4.*

**What John wrote**—If someone wants to abide in Christ, he should walk in obedience to God's moral law, just as Jesus did. Here is how the Apostle John described the way we should live:

"And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. **He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.** But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him. **He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.**"—*1 John 2:3-6.*

It is clear from the above statement, that **one cannot really know God, if he does not keep His commandments.**

John also said this:

“And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure. **Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.**

“And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. **Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not:** whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.”—1 John 3:3-7.

**The above text says that sin is (not was) the transgression of the law, thus showing that the law is still in force in the gospel dispensation.**

**And that word, “whosoever,” shows the universality of its binding claims.** Everyone who commits sin transgresses the law.

**John said that those who love God, always love to obey His commandments.**

“By this we know that we love the children of God, **when we love God, and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments:** and His commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world.”—1 John 5:2-4.

**What James wrote—The Apostle James, years after the Christian Era began, clearly emphasized the obligation of the Christian to keep the law of Ten Commandments,—not merely one precept, but all. He declared this law to be the standard by which men will be judged in the great day of God.**

As Christians, we are required to keep this law as much as were God’s people in ancient times. **The only basic standard of human morality that God gave to us is the Ten Commandments.**

James was very clear in his defense of God’s moral law:

**“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.** For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. **So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.**”—James 2:10-12.

**James also spoke against those who say they are Christians, but who are not obedient to the commands of God.**

“Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls. **But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.**

“For if any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, **he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.**”—James 1:21-25.

**Here is part of the official creed of the Church of England:**

**“I. God gave to Adam a law by which He bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience;** promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it; and endued him with power and ability to keep it.

**“II. This law after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness;** and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai in ten commandments, and written in two tables; the first four commandments containing our duty towards God, and the other six our duty to man.”—*The Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 19, quoted in Philip Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom, Vol. 3, p. 640.*

**If someone tells you that we don’t need to keep the law anymore, ask him which of the Ten Commandments he thinks we don’t need to keep anymore.** He will generally have no answer to that.

“Now men may cavil as much as they like about other parts of the Bible, but **I have never met an honest man that found fault with the Ten Commandments.**”—Dwight L. Moody, *Weighed and Wanting*, p. 11.

#### THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH

**The Bible teaches that sin is the transgression of God’s moral law, and everyone has broken it.**

“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” 1 John 3:4. And “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). “Both Jews and Gentiles . . . are all under sin.” Verse 9. “All have sinned.” Romans 5:12.

**If we continue in our sins, we will perish.** “The wages of sin are death.” Romans 6:23. “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Genesis 2:17. The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” Ezekiel 18:4.

“Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”—Ecclesiastes 8:11.

“Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him.”—Isaiah 3:10-11.

**Martin Luther wrote this:**

“God threatens to punish all who transgress these commandments. We should, therefore, fear

His anger, and do nothing against such commandments. But **He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep them. We should, therefore, love and trust in Him, and gladly obey His commandments.**”—*Martin Luther, Luther’s Small Catechism, quoted in Philip Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom, Vol. 3, p. 77.*

**Jonathan Edwards**, a leading Protestant revivalist of the eighteenth century in the American Colonies, wrote that **the law of God became even more important because Christ died**, so that, through Him, we could become obedient to it and be saved. The alternative would have been for Christ not to die on Calvary—and, without hope, everyone die in their sins.

**“Through the atonement of Christ more honor is done to the law, and consequently the law is more fully established,** than if the law had been literally executed, and all mankind had been condemned.”—*Jonathan Edwards, Works (1842 ed.), Vol. 2, p. 369.*

#### **It is a serious thing to trample upon God’s law.**

“Against every evildoer, God’s law utters condemnation. He may disregard that voice, he may seek to drown its warning, but in vain. It follows him. It makes itself heard. It destroys his peace. If unheeded, it pursues him.”—*Education, 144-145.*

#### **GOD’S GIFT IS ETERNAL LIFE**

But, thank God, *there is hope! Those who surrender their lives to God’s dear Son, Jesus Christ, and humbly “follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth” (Revelation 14:4) will be able to be saved—and live forever with Him in heaven!* Oh, my friend, we must obtain this glorious prize! God offers it; we can have it.

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that **He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish,** but have everlasting life.”—*John 3:14-16.*

“When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. **What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.**

“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

**“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life** through Jesus Christ our Lord.”—*Romans 6:20-23.*

How thankful we can be that, **through the power of Christ’s sacrifice on Calvary, He can empower us to live godly lives.**

“But as many as received Him, to them gave

**He power to become the sons of God**, even to them that believe on His name.”—*John 1:12.*

#### **John Calvin wrote this:**

**“We must not imagine that the coming of Christ has freed us from the authority of the law;** for it is the eternal rule of a devout and holy life, and must, therefore, be as unchangeable as the justice of God.”—*John Calvin, Commentary on a Harmony of the Gospels, Vol. 1, p. 277.*

#### **FAITH, LOVE, AND THE LAW**

Some say that all we need is “faith.” But **does faith in God make void His moral law; that is, set aside the need to obey it?**

**“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”—Romans 3:31.**

The truth is that **genuine faith in Christ—provides enabling strength to keep God’s law. But those who profess to accept Christ, yet refuse obedience to the will of God—do not have faith, but presumption.** They imagine that their words and expressions of faith will save them. Yet, because they are not connected with Christ, they are in terrible danger! For they think their profession of faith and their church attendance will save them—while they are actually separated from Christ and living in an unsaved state.

More than all else, **the fact that “Christ died for our sins” (1 Corinthians 15:3) makes it certain that the law could not have been abolished!**

**If the moral law could have been abolished when mankind sinned, then Christ need not have died.** But this wonderful gift of Christ proves the unchangeableness of God’s law. Christ had to come and die on the cross, to satisfy the demands of the law,—or the world must perish. The law could not give way.

Although His great sacrifice was sufficient to save everyone on earth, the great tragedy is that most people will reject it. They would rather remain in their sins.

**The fact that the law is to be the standard in the judgment is another proof of its enduring nature.** If the law was destroyed at Calvary, how could it be standard in the judgment later on?

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: **Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.**

**“For God shall bring every work into judgment,** with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”—*Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.*

By His grace, Christ can enable us to fully keep the law of God. In doing so, we are liberated—freed—from slavery to sinful habits. But those who refuse to be freed will be judged and

**condemned by that law.**

“Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. **So speak ye, and so do as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.**”—*James 2:10-12.*

**Actual obedience is required of the Christian, not just talk.**

“For not the hearers of the law are just before God, **but the doers of the law shall be justified.**”—*Romans 2:13 (also Matthew 21:28-31).*

“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, **but a doer** of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”—*James 1:25.*

**How can we know that we have passed from death to life?**

“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.”—*1 John 3:14.*

**How can we know that we genuinely love the brethren?**

“By this **we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments.**”—*1 John 5:2.*

**What does it mean to really love God?**

“**For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments:** and His commandments are not grievous.”—*1 John 5:3.*

**Martin Luther said this:**

“He who destroys the doctrine of the law, destroys at the same time political and social order . . . as to the law in itself, I never rejected it.”—*Martin Luther, quoted in M. Michelet’s Life of Luther, p. 315.*

#### IN THE LAST DAYS

Now as always before, **Christ does not save men in sin, but He saves them from their sins.** Since sin is the transgression of God’s law, Christ must save His people from lawbreaking, or He can never qualify them for heaven.

**In the final crisis, just before Christ returns for His faithful ones, the world will become so wicked—that men will be required to disobey God’s law.** But the remnant, those of God’s children who live down at the end of time, will be true to Him.

**This final remnant will be distinguished by the fact that they keep all ten of God’s commandments! —And they do it by the enabling grace of Christ!**

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with **the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God,** and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”—*Revelation 12:17.*

“Here is the patience of the saints: **here are they that keep the commandments of God,** and the

faith of Jesus.”—*Revelation 14:12.*

**The promise is rich and abundant. Those who faithfully obey God—will inherit eternal life!**

**“Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”—Revelation 22:14.**

The next verse lists many people who will not be permitted to enter those gates. Yet **only a few verses later, God pleads with each of us, while there is still time, to come—so we too can receive the glorious future He has in store for the redeemed!**

“The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. **And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.**”—*Revelation 22:17.*

We are told that the devils also believe in Christ, and tremble because they will eventually perish.

**“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.** Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.

“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: **the devils also believe, and tremble.**

“But wilt thou know, O vain man, that **faith without works is dead?**”—*James 2:17-20.*

#### IN CONCLUSION

In this chapter, **we have learned that believing in Christ includes obeying Christ and becoming like Him.** That makes that most famous of all verses—all the more precious to us.

**“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”—John 3:16.**

There are two striking things in the above text: **When God loves, He loves a world. When He gives, He gives His Son.** Such is the boundless love of the eternal Father and Son for mankind.

**How deep is that love?**

“Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption.”—*Isaiah 38:17.*

“He brought me up also out of an horrible pit.”—*Psalms 40:2.*

**How high is it?**

“And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”—*Ephesians 2:6.*

**What is its length and breadth?**

“That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”—*Ephesians 2:7.*

As we have learned in this chapter, **God has rules for our lives, so that, by obeying them through the enabling grace of Christ, we will be prepared to live through eternity in the happi-**

ness of heaven.

**While there is yet time to do it, each of us have a choice to make.** On God's side is Calvary's sacrifice, the commandments made more sure by it, and eternal life. On Satan's side is sin, and self, and death; nothing pleasant, nothing worth having.

**To every one of us, God sends this urgent, personal, appeal:**

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that **I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice.**"—*Deuteronomy 30:19-20.*

Earlier in this chapter, the words of John Wesley who loved the law of God were quoted. Here is a poem by another child of God who also loved that law: Isaac Watts, one of the greatest Christian songwriters of history.

"O that the Lord would guide my ways, To keep His statutes still! O that my God would grant me grace To know and do His will!

"O send Thy Spirit down to write Thy law upon my heart; Nor let my tongue indulge deceit, Nor act the liar's part.

"From vanity turn off my eyes, Let no corrupt design Nor covetous desires arise Within this soul of mine.

"Make me to walk in Thy commands, 'Tis a delightful road; Nor let my head, nor heart, nor hands, Offend against my God."—*Isaac Watts.*

### MY COMMITMENT

Father in heaven, I want, more than anything else, that my life will be pleasing to Thee. Christ has done so much for me, and I want to do all I can to be live in conformity to Thy holy will for my life. I thank Thee for this understanding of Thy holy moral law. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—A very important chapter, which carefully explains how Christ enables us to obey His moral law of Ten Commandments. This is information that each of us needs to know.

# Saved by Grace

—What Christ Does in Our Lives

**In a certain Midwest village, there was a dishonest man who sold firewood to his neighbors—but always cut it a little short of the required four feet.**

One day people heard that he had been converted, but that seemed impossible; for everyone knew what he had been like earlier. So no one believed the report. But one man slipped quietly out of the grocery store where they were discussing this,—and soon came back running. **“It’s so! He has been converted!”** They all asked, “How do you know?”

**“Why,” he said, “I went over and measured the wood that he cut yesterday. It is all a good four feet in length.”**

**The person who accepts Christ as His Saviour becomes a new man, obedient to the Ten Commandments.**

**The moral law of God is closely connected with Jesus Christ.** Apart from the conviction of sin which the law brings, none will come to Him. And apart from His forgiving, enabling grace the Ten Commandment can do nothing to change our hearts and lives.

**In this chapter we want to discover how wonderfully the two are connected.** In doing so, we discover that Christ did not make the supreme sacrifice of dying on Calvary—just so a bunch of sinners, reveling in their delicious sins, could be taken to heaven.

No, no. **His sufferings and death were designed to bring us into total harmony with, and obedience to, God’s moral law—so we could be transformed** into godly people who, in thought, word, and conduct, become like Jesus.

But, of course, all this could not happen if Christ destroyed the Ten Commandments when He died!

**In the early days of America, a band of explorers gave an Indian chief a sundial.** He was so happy to have it that he built a shelter over it, to protect it from sun and rain. But, because it was hidden from the sunlight, it could no longer indicate the time of day—and thus became a useless piece of brass, unable to be used according to its original purpose.

Perfect as is the holy Ten Commandment law, there are some things it cannot do.

**We want to learn (1) what the law can do for the sinner, (2) what it cannot do for him, (3)**

**what the grace of Christ can do for him, and (4) what the law can do for the person receiving the grace of Christ.**

## WHAT THE LAW DOES FOR THE SINNER

**First, the law gives a knowledge of sin.**

“For **by the law is the knowledge of sin.**”—*Romans 3:20.*

“What shall we say then? is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, **I had not known sin, but by the law:** for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”—*Romans 7:7.*

The law that does this is the Ten Commandment law, of which “thou shalt not covet” is the tenth commandment.

**Second, the law brings a sense of guilt.**

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”—*Romans 3:19.*

A man drives fast through a stop sign, and then hears a police siren behind him, and suddenly he is gripped with fear. Disobedience has placed him “under the law;” that is, under its condemnation. The presence of the law intensifies guilt and fear in the heart of the violator. Before God’s law, all the world must plead guilty, for “all have sinned” (*Romans 3:23*).

(It is true that some refuse to admit guilt, pleading the excuse for their ongoing sins by saying that Christ destroyed the law at Calvary—so they are going to be saved anyway, merely by saying they are Christians. But such folk are living in fools’ paradise, and they will one day have to answer in the Judgment for their conduct, and the way their flimsy excuses influenced others to continue their rebellion against God.)

**The third function of the law is to act as a spiritual mirror.** By looking at it, we see the flaws in ourselves which need correcting.

“For if any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”—*James 1:23-25.*

Shortly afterward, James explains that this “law of liberty” is the Ten Commandments (*James 2:9-12*). He says that we are to be “judged by the perfect law of liberty,” and identifies it as the one which says, “Do not commit adultery,” and “Do not kill.”

**It was Abraham Lincoln who said, “It seems**

**to me that nothing short of infinite wisdom could by any possibility have devised and given to man this excellent and perfect moral code."**

Thank God that we have those ten rules to govern our lives, and that we have Christ to write them on our hearts (that is, our minds), so we can be pure and clean like Him!

John Brown, an evangelist of the nineteenth century, said, **"The human heart cannot receive the healing thread of the Gospel—unless it is first pierced by the needle of the law."**

#### **WHAT THE LAW CANNOT DO FOR THE SINNER**

The sinner desperately needs two things which the law cannot provide.

**First, he needs forgiveness, or justification.** He needs to be forgiven of his past sins so he can become God's child. The publican cried for forgiveness, and went down to his house "justified" (*Luke 18:13-14*). But "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified" (*Romans 3:20*).

Perfect as it is, the law of God cannot forgive sin. It can only tell us that we are sinners and under its condemnation. That is what it means to be "under the law." **Only the Lawgiver can forgive; and He died on Calvary and rose afterward, so He can forgive the truly repentant and enable them to be genuine overcomers.** The needle of the law cannot never sew up the wounds that sin has made.

**The second thing the sinner needs is power to resist sin, or sanctification.** But God's holy law cannot provide this either. The sinner must be changed, and the law cannot do this.

"Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law."—*Galatians 3:21*.

Those who want to remain in their sins will accept any theory which seems to eliminate God's law. Indeed, the error that it is all right to continue in sin is taught in most pulpits of every major religion both in Christianity and the other world religions. Why? Because men want such a religion.

"The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."—*Romans 8:7*.

A mirror may reveal a dirty face, but it cannot cleanse it or make it clean.

#### **WHAT THE GRACE OF CHRIST CAN DO FOR HIM**

**An acquaintance of a certain minister committed a crime** for what he was sentenced to years in the penitentiary. After he had served a year or two, the minister went to the governor of the state and

persuaded him that it would be to the best interest of society to grant this young man a pardon. "And," said the governor, "I will make you the bearer of his pardon."

With the pardon in his pocket, the minister went to the penitentiary. Before handing him the paper which would make him a free man, the minister asked him, "John, if you should receive a pardon from the governor, what would you do?"

"Mr. Johnson, if I ever get out of this place, the first thing I will do is buy a gun and kill old Lawton who testified against me at the trial."

Sorrowfully, the minister left, taking the pardon with him. **This was a case where a man had violated the law, and grace could not help him.**

**The forgiveness which the law cannot provide, Christ will give to the one who genuinely wants to separate from his sins.**

"For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved."—*John 3:17*.

Those who refuse to come to Him are "condemned already" (*verse 18*). They are still under the law's condemnation.

**It is the grace of Christ which makes this forgiveness and transformation possible.** His grace is unmerited favor. This marvelous love awakens love in the repentant, believing, forgiven sinner. By not resisting this love, the newly converted soul becomes determined to serve and obey God.

Forgiveness of sin and power to resist sin comes through the exercise of faith in God's promises, given in the Bible, and a full surrender of the heart to Jesus Christ.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith."—*Ephesians 2:8*.

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."—*Romans 8:3-4*.

**The sinner comes to Christ and cries:**

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence."—*Psalms 51:10-11*.

**And Christ gives him "righteousness and sanctification" (1 Corinthians 1:30).**

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."—*1 John 4:10*.

**Choking with feeling at such a great sacrifice for us individually, we exclaim—**

"We love Him, because He first loved us!"—*1 John 4:19*.

“Plunged in a gulf of dark despair, We wretched sinners lay, Without one cheering gleam of hope, Or spark of glimmering day.

“With pitying eyes the Prince of peace Beheld our helpless grief. He saw—and oh, Amazing love! He came to our relief!”

#### **WHAT THE LAW CAN DO FOR THE PERSON RECEIVING THE GRACE OF CHRIST**

**First, it can show that he is a new creature in Christ.** After someone has come to Christ and received forgiveness and acceptance (justification) in His sight, what can the law now do for this individual?

“Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.”—*Romans 3:21*.

—What a most wonderful promise! **The law can now point to this man as someone living in accordance with it!** God’s moral law testifies that, depending moment by moment on Jesus Christ for empowering grace, he continues to put away his sins and live a decent, honest, kindly life.

Fleeing to the fountain at Calvary, we plunge beneath the flood—and are forgiven and cleansed. Looking now into the mirror of the law, we see that, indeed, we are clean.

**Second, he must continue to live in accordance with that law.** Because we have accepted Christ as our Saviour, **we must not think we can now smash the mirror of God’s law, thinking that we no longer need it. Instead, we must live in continued obedience to it!**

We must remain submissive, humble, and obedient to Christ—or we will ere long drift back into our sins! Satan will see to that. He will be there to tempt us to do the things we once did, associate with the evil friends we once liked to be with, indulge in the evils we once loved.

“**What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.** Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”—*Romans 6:15-16*.

**Wholehearted obedience to the law of God is the supreme responsibility and privilege of each one who has come to Christ.**

“Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound . . . **What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.** How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? . . . **Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body,** that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.”—*Romans 5:20, 6:1-2, 12*.

**Godliness is a battle and a march! Christianity is clinging constantly to Christ. Victory over**

**temptation is something won anew all through the day.** There is no let up. There is no time out.

**But, oh, how happy the experience of living in Christ!** It is worth all the seeming “sacrifices” that we make in order to have it.

“Through the gates to the city, in a robe of spotless white, He will lead me where no tears shall ever fall; In the glad song of ages I shall mingle with delight; But I long to meet my Saviour first of all.

“I shall know Him I shall know Him, As redeemed by His side I shall stand. I shall know Him, I shall know Him, By the print of the nails in His hands.”—*Fanny Crosby*.

**Yet, in this battle, let us not become like the foolish man or the vain man:**

**The foolish man tries to be saved by his own efforts to keep the law.** Recognizing that the mirror shows him to be a sinner, he does not go to Christ but decides that his own good deeds are sufficient. He is trying to use the mirror to wash himself! “Works of penance” is not the solution.

“O **foolish** Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”—*Galatians 3:1-2*.

The vain man thinks he can be saved “by faith alone,” apart from obedience to God’s law. Finding that the mirror condemns his sins, he takes a hammer and tries to break the mirror. He excuses his actions, and continued sins, by repeating the error that Christ did away with the law, so we could be saved in our sins—as long as we call ourselves Christians and attend church once in a while.

“But wilt thou know, O **vain man**, that faith without works is dead?”—*James 2:20*.

**The blessed man** also looks into this perfect mirror,—but then **runs to Christ in repentance, pleading for forgiveness for past sins, and strength to resist sin and live right in the future.** Receiving forgiveness by grace through faith, he exclaims:

“**Blessed** is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. **Blessed** is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.”—*Psalms 32:1-2*.

“**Blessed** is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”—*Psalms 1:1-3*.

It was H.M.S. Richards who once said,

"A few years ago, almost everyone could repeat the Ten Commandments. Fewer can today, but all should be able to do so. There would be far less juvenile and adult delinquency in the world if both old and young not only memorized, but obeyed, the Ten Commandments. It would change our world!"

**Grace** is like a governor's pardon to a prisoner. It forgives him the past, but it is not a license to once again violate any of the laws on the statute books.

**Faith** is like a man's hand. It reaches out and accepts the pardon. —But at the same time, it reaches up and takes hold of Christ's hand for continued strength to keep obeying in the future.

**Love** "is the fulfilling of the law" (*Romans 13:10*).

"This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments."—*1 John 5:3*.

"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart . . . Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."—*Romans 6:17-18*.

**This holy, perfect, eternal Christ, of whose character the law was a written transcript, and whose life was a living revelation of that same law;—this Christ, God gave to save you.** No one else in God's universe could meet the demands of the holy, unchangeable law of the Eternal God, and make that obedience available to you.

He lives for you (*Matthew 20:28*). He died for you (*1 Peter 2:24*). He offers pardon to you (*Isaiah 55:7; 1 John 1:9*). He offers grace and power to you (*Hebrews 4:16*). He offers heaven to you (*Matthew 19:27-29*).

**Do not hesitate. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16:31. He will strengthen you to live like Him—a clean, godly life.**

**If you will believe, you shall receive. Do not trust to feeling. Take your sins to the cross. Exchange them for forgiveness.** Ask God to give you a new heart, and write His holy law upon it, that you may love it and keep it. Believe that, as you have prayed in the name of Jesus, God does this. Surrender your all to Him. Make no reservation. Give all. Receive all that God wants to give you.

"I felt His love, the strongest love,  
That mortal ever felt."

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#### SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

**There are two peculiar errors which some use to excuse the fact that they would rather keep sinning than obey God's Moral Law.** One is an error about the *human nature of Christ*. The second

is an error about *the nature of sin*.

#### THE NATURE OF CHRIST

In an attempt to evade God's requirement that we must overcome sin and obey His holy law, **some say that Christ did not really take a human nature like ours,—for if He had, while on earth He could not have resisted sin and would have fallen.** Frankly, that is blasphemous and very evil, for it downgrades both the character of Christ and the enabling power of grace.

This strange error teaches that **Christ inherited the nature of Adam before he fell into sin, and that Christ had the same type of Catholic "immaculateness" that it is claimed that the Virgin Mary had: an inability to sin!** It is said that Christ could not sin if He had wanted to. The theory goes on and says that, if He had inherited the same fallen nature which we inherit (a nature which can be tempted and can fall into sin), Christ could not have resisted temptation and would have become a sinner. Why? Because, **according to the theory, it is impossible for anyone living on earth—including Christ while He was here—to either keep from sinning or stop doing it!**

**This strange teaching that, during His life on earth, Christ was unable to sin, originates with Catholic error about a supposed "immaculate nature" which the Virgin Mary is supposed to have had, which Catholicism teaches that her Son Jesus also shared.**

"We define that the Blessed Virgin Mary in the first moment of her conception . . . **was preserved free from every taint of original sin. The soul of Mary was never subject to sin.**"—*Cardinal Gibbons, Faith of Our Fathers*, pp. 203-204.

**There is an abundance of evidence from the Bible which totally disproves this error.**

The Bible teaches that **Christ took our exact nature—the one you and I have—which is able to sin. Then, in our nature, He never once yielded to sin** in any way. He was totally sinless. He relied on His Father for help, as we now may rely on Christ. **Therefore, Christ is able to be our perfect Example, and provide us with forgiving and enabling grace to resist sin as He did.** He provides all willing to humbly, obediently accept it, with a perfect atonement.

Unfallen Adam was able to—and did—fall into sin (*Genesis 3*), so how could it be that unfallen Christ could not? The angels in heaven also had unfallen natures, yet a third of them fell (*2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 12:4, 7-9*)!

Abraham lived 4,000 years after Adam, and **Christ took the nature of Abraham's descendants.**

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, **He also Himself likewise took part of the same**; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily **He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham**. Wherefore **in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren**, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that **He Himself hath suffered being tempted**, He is able to succour them that are tempted.”—*Hebrews 2:14-18*.

**Although Christ was tempted in all points like us, yet He never once sinned.**

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; **but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin**. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”—*Hebrews 4:15-16*.

**Christ was not only a descendant of Abraham, He was a descendant of David, who lived 3,000 years after Adam.**

“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”—*Matthew 1:1*.

“If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”—*Galatians 3:29*.

**Christ fully took our nature so He could fully bear our sins in the atonement.**

“For **He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin**; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”—*2 Corinthians 5:21* (also *Philippians 2:6-8*).

**Christ can keep us from sinning.** That is why He came to earth.

“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: **for He shall save His people from their sins**.”—*Matthew 1:21*.

**He was made the way we are made**, so He could redeem us and enable us to obey the law.

“When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, **made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law**, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”—*Galatians 4:4-5*.

**Because He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, He is able to condemn sin in the flesh.** If He could not do that, He could not provide the atonement.

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son **in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh**: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”—*Romans 8:3-4*.

**Christ really came in the flesh.** Here is a strong warning not to accept this error about the human nature of Christ which denies that, here on earth, He was really in our flesh.

“And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God.”—*1 John 4:3*.

**It is because Christ fully took our nature, that He is able to provide us with a perfect example of obedience**—and the Bible teaches that we are to follow His example.

“**He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked**.”—*1 John 2:6*.

“For even hereunto were ye called: because **Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps: Who did no sin**, neither was guile found in His mouth.”—*1 Peter 2:21-22*.

#### ORIGINAL SIN

**This strange error was also invented as an attempt to excuse those who want to keep enjoying their sins.** Augustine (A.D. 354-430), a Catholic monk who could not control his lusts (and admitted the fact in his writings), theorized that God did not want people to stop sinning, that they could not escape from it in this life, and that they were born in sin; that is, *born sinners* (“original sin”). Therefore, we are not individually responsible for our sins. (Augustine was later “sainted” for also teaching that, outside of the Catholic Church there is no salvation.)

**The Bible truth is that we are born with a fallen nature (which we inherit from Adam),—but we were not born sinful; we were not born sinners. We do not inherit sin, and we do not inherit guilt.**

Through Christ’s sacrifice on the cross and His mediation in the Sanctuary in heaven, He provides enabling grace to those who surrender their lives to Him, so they can resist temptation and overcome sin.

**Here are several Bible verses which show that we are individually responsible for our own sins:**

Ezekiel 18:14-25 is very important, but too long to quote here. It teaches that **we are individually responsible for our own sins and that we do not inherit them from our fathers**.

“The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: **every man shall be put to death for his own sin**.”—*Deuteronomy 24:16*.

**“Every one shall die for his own iniquity.”**—*Jeremiah 31:30* (*Proverbs 9:12; Romans 2:6; Galatians 6:5, 7*).

Here are additional passages: *Isaiah 3:10-11; Psalms 128:1-2; 1:3-5; 11:4-6; Ecclesiastes 8:12-*

13; Galatians 6:7-9; Romans 2:6-9; 2 Corinthians 5:10; and Hebrews 6:12.

**The closest that this error can come to proving original sin is found in two Bible verses:**

**Here is the first of the two verses:**

"Wherefore, as **by one man sin entered into the world**, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, **for that all have sinned.**"—Romans 5:12.

The first phrase, which they rely on, is a statement of fact, with no explanation offered. The explanation comes in the last part of the verse: "for that all have sinned." **The verse does not say because all have inherited guilt from Adam, but because all have personally sinned.** They have guilt of their own, and do not have to borrow any from Adam.

*Here is what the Bible teaches:*

**"For the wages of sin is death."**—Romans 6:23.

**"The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father**, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and **the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.**"—Ezekiel 18:20.

The next verse after that says that **the person is not locked into his sin, as original sin teaches, but can turn from it:**

"But **if the wicked will turn from all his sins** that he hath committed, and keep all My statutes, **and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live**, he shall not die."—Ezekiel 18:21.

**Here is the second of the two verses:**

"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."—Psalm 51:5.

Augustine's theory was that the very act of procreating a child is sinful. How horrible! But that error is disproved by this verse:

**"Marriage is honorable** in all, and the bed undefiled."—Hebrews 13:4.

"For Thou art my hope, O Lord God: Thou art my trust from my youth. **By Thee have I been holden up from the womb:** Thou art He that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of Thee."—Psalm 71:5-6. (Another example is Psalm 22:9-10.)

In accordance with Romans 3:23, David was simply saying, in poetic language, that he was a sinner and his mother was a sinner too.

### MY COMMITMENT

Oh, my wonderful Father in heaven, how I love Thee! I see now that Christ—in order to meet the law's demands—enables me by His grace to live a clean, godly life as He did! What a wonderful plan! Thou wants to change my life into something far better than I could ever make it into by myself! I

now see the importance of Calvary and the atonement better than ever before. Thank you so much for what Thou art doing to save my soul from sin! In Jesus' name, Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—Many are confused about the word "law" in the New Testament. We are going to discover that there were two laws; one which was abolished at the cross, and the other which was placed on an even more solid foundation by Christ's death.

A Complete Evangelistic Sermon: Chapter Twenty-Two

# Who Nailed What to the Cross

## The Two Laws

**Martin Luther, a Roman Catholic monk, was a leading professor at the Catholic University of Wittenberg, Germany.** On October 31, 1517, he tacked on the Castle Church door a paper containing ninety-five points, or principles, of protest which he had written against what he believed to be unholy practices of the Catholic Church.

**Luther's bold act was a world-shaking event.** Because small printing presses had by that time been invented, his paper was quickly copied, printed, and circulated throughout Europe. **It led men and women everywhere to want to return to the Bible as the basis of Christianity,** rather than the dogmas and rituals of the official church.

**Nearly 2,000 years ago, Roman soldiers nailed, not a holy protest to a church door, but a holy Man to a tree.** These men did not realize who the Man was or what they were really doing. And the Man prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (*Luke 23:34*).

**The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was a universe-shaking event,** opening a new era of world history and making certain a future time when sin and sinners will be no more and all the intelligent creation will worship the true God and obey the precepts of His holy law.

### SOMETHING NAILED TO THE CROSS

**The dying Son of God Himself is said to have nailed something to that cross.** The Apostle Paul speaks of it in these words:

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us . . . **and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.**"—*Colossians 2:14*.

This does not mean that Jesus actually took a hammer and nailed a roll of ordinances to His cross. **But it does signify that some law or set of laws ended at His death.** What could this be?

Later, in another passage, Paul speaks of this again:

"Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances."—*Ephesians 2:15*.

**It is quite obvious that there must be more than one type, or kind, of law in the Bible. We know that the moral law of God—the Ten Commandments—did not end at Calvary.** Hundreds of passages in the Bible tell us that. It is just as wrong

today for one to steal, kill, commit adultery, or break any other of the Ten Commandments as it ever was.

**Christ did not come to destroy the moral law, but He came to fulfill it;** that is, give us a perfect example of how to live in accordance with it. In addition, He gave us the enabling strength, as we remain by His side, to fully obey it.

Indeed, if God had wanted to abolish the law which is the standard of all morality, Christ would not have died to meet its holy demands. God's moral law is as enduring as His own character!

### THREE TYPES OF BIBLE LAWS

**There are several types of laws in the Bible.**

**First, there is the great moral law of Ten Commandments.** This law was written by the finger of God Himself on solid rock (*Exodus 31:18*). This is the law, of which Christ Himself said:

"Think not that **I am come to destroy the law,** or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, **Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law.**"—*Matthew 5:17-18*.

**Second, there are the ceremonial, sacrificial sanctuary laws,** which governed the animal sacrifices which foreshadowed the death of Christ.

**Third, there are the civil laws of the Jewish nation,** which regulated a multitude of matters pertaining to crime, court procedures, disease control, and so forth.

**When the Jewish nation, as God's chosen instrument, came to an end, the civil laws naturally lapsed.** For example, by the law of *Exodus 22:1*, if someone stole an ox, when caught he had to repay the owner five oxen. Although this law was a good one, it would not necessarily be followed in a nation today. **However, the underlying principles are still applicable.** For instance, it is just as obligatory upon a Christian to abide by the principles of healthful living, which the Hebrews were to obey.

### WHEN THEY WERE ABOLISHED

**So what was it that was nailed to the cross? It was the ceremonial laws, the rules and regulations governing animal sacrifices—all of which foreshadowed the death of Christ.** Those rules had been given to remind the people, down through the centuries, that their sins could only be forgiven by the Messiah who would someday come.

It was the ceremonial laws which were nailed to the cross, "the law of commandments **contained in ordinances**" (*Ephesians 2:15*), "the **handwriting of ordinances** that was against us" (*Colossians 2:14*).

**The Ten Commandments were not "ordinances,"** and they were not "handwriting" produced by any human hand. God wrote them with His own

finger on rock.

So it was that at the moment that Christ died on the cross,—gone were the blood offerings, the meat and drink offerings, the special yearly holy days, such as Passover, Pentecost, etc.

**All these typical services and yearly holy days pointed forward to Christ and His death on Mount Calvary.**

It is of the highest significance that, **at the exact moment of Christ's death, the great inner veil of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem—the veil dividing the first apartment from the second apartment—was torn from top to bottom—ripped into two pieces!** (*Matthew 27:51*). This clearly signified that the ceremonial system of laws and regulations—had come to an end, as far as God was concerned.

In order to express this in a dramatic way, Paul said that Christ nailed those ordinances to the cross.

#### THE YEARLY SABBATHS

**Included in these ordinances which were abolished at Calvary—were the shadow sabbaths. These were yearly (not weekly) gatherings. All of them came to an end, as far as God was concerned, at the death of Christ.**

For example, **an important one was the Passover service**, which was also held in the spring of the year. It is explained in detail in Exodus 12:21-49.

On that night, as He had warned Pharaoh, the angel of God was about to slay all the firstborn in the land of Egypt. But all who gathered in the homes of the Israelites would be safe. This was because **God's people were instructed to place blood from a slain lamb on the door posts (sides) and lintels (top) of the entrance door to each of their homes.**

"Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the Passover."—*Exodus 12:21*.

"Ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses."—*Exodus 12:27*.

**This symbol obviously pointed to Christ's death on the cross to redeem all those who would accept Him as their Saviour.**

#### TWO KINDS OF SABBATHS

**Now it is very important that we clearly recognize that there are two kinds of sabbaths!**

**First, there is the weekly Sabbath.** This is always written in the singular, "Sabbath" (never "sabbaths"). God's people are commanded to rest on the seventh day of every week, week after week. **This weekly Sabbath is commanded in the Fourth Commandment:**

**"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work.**

**"But the seventh day is the Sabbath** of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.

"For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: **wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.**"—*The Fourth Commandment, Exodus 20:8-11*.

**This is not a "shadow law" to be done away at the death of Christ!** This is part of the moral law of Ten Commandments.

**Indeed, not only will it be kept all the way down to just before Christ returns for His people,—but also after that in the earth made new!**

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with **the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God**, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."—*Revelation 12:17*.

"Here is the patience of the saints: **here are they that keep the commandments of God**, and the faith of Jesus."—*Revelation 14:12*.

"For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that . . . **from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me**, saith the Lord."—*Isaiah 66:22-23*.

Notice that **while the ceremonial sabbaths (plural) prefigured (looked forward to) the death of Christ, when they would end, the Bible Sabbath (singular) was kept as a memorial (looking back) to the great facts of the seven-day Creation of our world.**

This is because God specifically set the seventh day aside as a special weekly rest day,—and He did this on the seventh day of Creation Week (*Genesis 2:1-3*).

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

**"And on the seventh day, God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made.**

**"And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it:** because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made."—*Genesis 2:1-3*.

**So that there should be no uncertainty about whether mankind was to keep this weekly Sabbath, God wrote it with His own finger into the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:8-11).** He placed it in the very heart of the moral law.

**In contrast, the ceremonial laws ended at the cross**, and are referred to as "shadow sabbaths," for they foreshadowed Christ's death. They are also

called "feast days."

**Here is one passage in the New Testament, where Paul mentioned these yearly, ceremonial sabbaths:**

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, **or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come;** but the body is of Christ."—*Colossians 2:16-17*.

#### COMPARING THE TWO LAWS

**Let us now compare the two laws: the moral law (the Ten Commandments), and the ceremonial laws (commandments contained in ordinances):**

##### 1 - The moral law is a perfect law.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul."—*Psalms 19:7*.

"All Thy commandments are righteousness."—*Psalms 119:172*.

"Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law is the truth."—*Psalms 119:142*.

##### The ceremonial law is an imperfect law.

"For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. **For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did;** by the which we draw nigh unto God."—*Hebrews 7:18-19*.

"**For the law having a shadow of good things to come,** and not the very image of the things, **can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.** For then would they not have ceased to be offered?"—*Hebrews 10:1-2*.

##### 2 - The moral law is in itself spiritual.

"We know that the law is spiritual."—*Romans 7:14*.

##### The ceremonial law is not in itself spiritual.

"Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only **in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.**"—*Hebrews 9:9-10*.

##### 3 - The moral law gives a knowledge of sin.

"By the law is the knowledge of sin."—*Romans 3:20*.

"What shall we say then? **is the law sin?** God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."—*Romans 7:7*.

**The ceremonial law was instituted in consequence of sin (see Leviticus 3 to 7).**

##### 4 - The moral law was spoken by God Himself.

"And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And **He declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even ten commandments.**"—*Deuteronomy 4:12-13 (Exodus 20:1-17)*.

"And He added no more."—*Deuteronomy 5:22*.

##### The ceremonial law was spoken by Moses.

"**And the Lord called unto Moses, and spake unto him** out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, **Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them,** If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock."—*Leviticus 1:1-2*.

"[Moses said:] **This is the law of the burnt offering, of the meat offering, and of the sin offering, and of the trespass offering, and of the consecrations, and of the sacrifice of the peace offerings.**"—*Leviticus 7:37. (Also see Leviticus 8:13-17.)*

##### 5 - The moral law was written by the Lord, with His own finger, upon two tables of stone.

"**These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly** in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, **with a great voice: and He added no more. And He wrote them in two tables of stone,** and delivered them unto me."—*Deuteronomy 5:22 (Exodus 31:18; 24:12)*.

##### The ceremonial law were written by Moses in a book.

"Thou shalt not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leaven . . . **And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words.**"—*Exodus 34:25, 27*.

"**And Moses wrote this law,** and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel."—*Deuteronomy 31:9 (Nehemiah 8:1; 2 Kings 22:8-16)*.

##### 6 - The moral law was placed in the ark of the covenant.

"**And he [Moses] took and put the testimony into the ark,** and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy seat above upon the ark."—*Exodus 40:20 (1 Kings 8:9; Hebrews 9:4)*.

##### The ceremonial law was placed outside the ark, by its side.

"And it came to pass, **when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book,** until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, **Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark** of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee."—*Deuteronomy 31:24-26*.

##### 7 - The moral law is eternal, and therefore requires obedience from all.

"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, **we establish the law.**"—*Romans 3:31*.

**"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill."**—*Matthew 5:17*.

**"It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail."**—*Luke 16:17*.

**"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."**—*Matthew 19:17*.

**"Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God."**—*1 Corinthians 7:19*.

**"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."**—*Revelation 22:14*.

**The ceremonial law has been abolished, and obedience to it is no longer required.**

**"Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace."**—*Ephesians 2:15*.

**"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."**—*Colossians 2:14-17*.

**"Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment."**—*Acts 15:24*.

#### OTHERS AGREE

**"Although the law given from God by Moses as touching ceremonies and rites, doth not bind Christians; yet, notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral."**—*Methodist Episcopal Church Doctrines and Discipline, p. 23*.

**"Ques.—Are we under obligation to keep the ceremonial law?"**

**"Ans.—No,** the ordinances which it enjoined were only types and shadows of Christ; and when **they were fulfilled by His death**, and the distinction between Jew and Gentile was removed, the ceremonial law was abolished, because it was no longer necessary.

**"Ques.—Are we under obligation to keep the moral law?"**

**"Ans.—Yes, because that is founded on the nature of God and cannot be changed;** it is of universal application, which was impossible with respect to the ceremonial and civil laws. Christ demands obedience to His law."—*The Lutheran Catechism*.

**The ceremonial laws are like the scaffolding of a building, to be removed when the building is finished. The moral law is like the foundation of the building.**

Throwing away the Ten Commandments, when the ceremonial law is discarded, is like tearing down the building when removing the scaffolding!

#### BUILT ON A ROCK

**Many years ago, a bridge was to be built across the Conemaugh River in Pennsylvania. It would in time come to be known as the "Stone Bridge."** The contract for the job was assigned to a contractor, who then set to work.

**On each side of the river he dug down, farther and still farther, until he reached bedrock.** Others told him it was too expensive to do this, but he was determined to build solidly. Finally, his arched, stone bridge was finished, and the extra cost was forgotten.

**In the late spring of 1889 melting snows in the mountains, plus heavy rains, brought more and more water down the streams.** The South Fork Reservoir, built 36 years earlier, was gradually filled to the very top. Its walls were weak, and finally gave way, permitting an avalanche of water to sweep down the valley. Trees, houses, buildings—everything was swept before the **gigantic liquid wall**.

**What would happen when all this water and wreckage would strike the bridge,** 14 miles below the dam, which had been built many years before? With awful impact it struck. The bridge stood solid!

**The flood swept on, spreading death and desolation in one of America's greatest disasters—the Johnstown Flood** of May 31, 1889. More than 20 million tons of water poured downstream, killing over 2,200 people.

But that bridge, built on the solid rock, stood like a lone and mighty stronghold in the midst of ruin and desolation. **It had stood the test of storms and floods—because it was fastened to the rock.** Holding back a massive amount of debris, it prevented many deaths downstream.

**Let us build upon the rock, Christ Jesus, and upon the foundation of His unchangeable, everlasting law.**

**"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.** For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law . . .

**"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock.** And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it

fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.”—*Matthew*  
5:17-18, 7:24-25.

#### **MY COMMITMENT**

Father, I thank Thee so much for providing a way that Thy people before the time of Christ could learn the truth about His atoning sacrifice. And I thank Thee that Christ's life and death were so perfectly done that the ceremonial law could be abolished at the cross. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—We are about to study a very important topic which our present world has almost entirely lost sight of. The truths revealed in this chapter will bring great comfort to your heart, as you accept it into your life.

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— PART SIX —

**CHRIST'S SPECIAL DAY**

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*A Complete Evangelistic Sermon: Chapter Twenty-Three*

# The Sign and Seal of God

*Proof That God Created Our World*

Someone has said that “craftsmen are men who cannot help doing whatever is given them to do better than others think worthwhile.”

**God is the great architect and supercraftsman of the universe.**

“To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and **behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names** by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth.”—*Isaiah 40:25-26*.

## ACCURACY IN TIMEKEEPING

**The starry wheels of God's huge and intricate clock never fail.** At the U.S. Naval Observatory in Washington, D.C., men have checked the stars of God to ascertain the correct time for men. From their observations they have set the nation's standard clock. In England, the Royal Observatory at Greenwich has maintained a similar service. (More recently, another of God's time-measuring wonders, *cesium*, an atom which is the basis of the NIST-F1 clock in Colorado is being used.)

**The source of such accuracy in timekeeping comes from God, the Master Mechanic of the universe and the atom.**

“Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? **there is no searching of His understanding.**”—*Isaiah 40:28*.

God's clocks never run down, because He keeps them running, and always on time.

Everyone honors a man who puts skill and effort and conscience into the creation of superior products. Let all men honor the Craftsman of all craftsmen, the Creator of the vast, intricate, mysterious universe.

## A PERFECT CREATOR

**What does the Bible teach about how our world, and all its forms of life, were first cre-**

**ated?**

In the first verse of the Bible we read: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” *Genesis 1:1*. Immediately after that, is the story of how God created one thing after another:

The first day, light. The second day, atmosphere. The third day, dry land and vegetation. The fourth day, the light of the sun, moon, and heavenly bodies. The fifth day, fish and fowl. The sixth day, animals and man.

It boggles our minds to grasp how God did all this. But the problem is not solved by the fool who simply says, “There is no God” (*Psalms 14:1*). Nor is it solved by simply forgetting the whole matter. **We need to have certainty about this, for “without faith it is impossible to please Him** [God], for he that cometh to God must believe that He is [that He exists]” (*Hebrews 11:6*).

**The order, system, and intelligence that we clearly observe all about us makes the truth of God's existence the most rational explanation of all.** The foolish theories of evolution, the vague talk of atheists—all ring hollow in comparison with the great facts of the Created Universe.

Without God, men have never yet been able to solve the riddle of which came first—the hen or the egg.

**“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God,** so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”—*Hebrews 11:3*.

“For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.”—*Psalms 33:9*.

**Everywhere we turn, in the vast Creation, we see the evidences of His footsteps.**

“The heavens declare the glory of God.”—*Psalms 19:1*.

**“For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.”**—*Romans 1:20*.

Long before the modern scientist declared that the earth has no visible means of support, Job said, “He . . . hangeth the earth upon nothing” (*Job 26:7*). Having made the world from nothing, He hung it upon nothing tangible.

This world and all worlds are upheld “by the Word of His power” (*Hebrews 1:3*).

## AN ETERNAL REMINDER OF HIS CREATORSHIP

**This is the God who declared something we should never forget:**

“Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall

perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.”—*Jeremiah 10:11*.

For, you see, **God makes the act of Creation as the proof which distinguishes Him from all false gods.** Write that principle deep in your thinking, for it will explain a lot that we are going to now discover.

**So that we would have no doubt about the matter, He gave us a special gift—that through all time to come, we would know that He is the Creator God—our God.**

For this is what He did on the seventh and last day of Creation Week:

“And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.”—*Genesis 1:31-2:1*.

#### **MADE FOR MANKIND AT THE CREATION OF OUR WORLD**

**“And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made.**

**“And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it:** because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.”—*Genesis 2:2-3*.

What a beautiful truth: **God gave the seventh-day Sabbath to mankind at the very creation of our world!** On the seventh day of Creation Week, **It was to always remain the special sign, or mark, of His Creatorship.**

This is the plain, unmistakable record given us in the Bible.

**By three distinct acts, then, was the Sabbath made: God rested on it; He blessed it; He sanctified it.** *Sanctify* means “to make sacred or holy; . . . to set apart to a sacred office or to religious use.”—*Webster’s New International Dictionary*.

**Only God could make one day holy. Only He could command that we keep it also.** Only He could explain the great truth that **we are to keep it because it identifies us as the only people on earth who recognize Him as the Creator God.**

**It shows that we are His people!** We gladly acknowledge Him as our Lord; the One who made us.

**That is why He placed this special command in the very heart of the Ten Commandments:**

**“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work.**

**“But the seventh day is the Sabbath** of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.

**“For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth,** the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.”—*Exodus 20:8-11*.

How good our God is to give us the Bible Sabbath. **There is a blessing in keeping it that we could receive in no other way, for we are obeying His express command.** When we do not obey Him, we always get into trouble.

Here is what one writer said about this:

“In Eden, God set up the memorial of His work of creation, in placing His blessing upon the seventh day. The Sabbath was committed to Adam, the father and representative of the whole human family. **Its observance was to be an act of grateful acknowledgment, on the part of all who should dwell upon the earth, that God was their Creator and their rightful Sovereign; that they were the work of His hands and the subjects of His authority.** Thus the institution was wholly commemorative, and given to all mankind. There was nothing in it shadowy or of restricted application to any people.

**“God saw that a Sabbath was essential for man,** even in Paradise. He needed to lay aside his own interests and pursuits for one day of the seven, that he might more fully contemplate the works of God and meditate upon His power and goodness. **He needed a Sabbath to remind him more vividly of God and to awaken gratitude** because all that he enjoyed and possessed came from the beneficent hand of the Creator.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 48.

God gave the Bible Sabbath to our first parents before they had sinned. **The Sabbath and marriage are two holy institutions that came from Eden to bless the world.**

The seventh-day Sabbath is for us to keep. **In the Fourth of the Ten Commandments, God commanded us to keep it.** Let us read it again:

**“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath** of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work.”—*Exodus 20:8-10*.

**Then He explains the reason why we must do this:**

**“For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth,** the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.”—*Exodus 20:11*.

#### **THE SIGN OF HIS CREATORSHIP AND HIS RIGHT TO RULE**

Elsewhere we read:

**“It is a sign** between Me and the children of Israel forever: **for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested,** and was refreshed.”—*Exodus 31:17*.

The Sabbath is thus the sign of God’s creator-

ship; our acknowledgement that He made us!

**But notice that it is not the sign because Jews are Jews, but because God is God and He is the Creator.**

He created the world in six days and rested on the seventh day—2,500 years before the Jewish nation came into existence!

The Bible Sabbath is not merely a day for physical rest, although we need that. By keeping it, we acknowledge that the Creator God is our God! For we are obeying His express command to keep that day holy! **We cannot select some other day; we must keep the exact day which He gave us—the seventh day of each weekly cycle.** (Later we shall discover absolute evidence that the weekly cycle has not changed, going all the way back to Moses and before. So our “seventh day” of the week—is the same seventh day that Moses kept and Jesus kept.)

On God’s part, **the Sabbath is a sign of His creatorship. It is the sign of His right to rule over us,** the symbol of His gracious and timeless sovereignty.

**On our part, it is the sign that we gratefully acknowledge Him as our Creator—and accept His rulership.**

“My Maker and My King, to Thee my all I owe; Thy sovereign bounty is the spring whence all my blessings flow. The creatures of Thy hand, on Thee alone I live; My God, Thy benefits demand more praise than I can give.

“Lord, what can I impart when all is Thine before? Thy love demands a thankful heart; the gift, alas! how poor. O let Thy grace inspire my soul with strength divine; Let every Word and each desire and all my days be Thine.”

**God tells us in Scripture that the Bible Sabbath is the seventh-day Sabbath, for there is no other weekly sabbath in the Bible.**

#### IT IS THE SEAL OF THE LAW

**He also tells us it is “the seal” of His holy Ten Commandment law. What is meant by this?**

**The seal of a law gives the name of the law-giver, his official title, and the extent of his dominion.** For example, “Elizabeth II [name], Queen [title], of England [extent of dominion].

Carefully examining all ten of the commandments, we find that the fourth, or Sabbath, commandment is the only one that qualifies as a seal.

Read it again carefully (*Exodus 20:8-11*), and you will find in it God’s seal:

**The Lord thy God [name], Creator [title], of heaven and earth [dominion].**

Thus when God wrote His law upon tables of stone, He engraved His seal in the law itself.

**The Bible Sabbath is the Creator’s sign of His right to rule. It therefore becomes the seal**

**of His law.**

So far we have learned that the Sabbath is (1) **the sign of God’s creative power and His right to rule;** and (2) **it is the seal of His holy law.**

#### IT IS THE MEMORIAL OF CREATION

**The Sabbath is also the memorial of Creation.** The Sabbath “commemorated” the Creation of our world. **It was given to the Hebrews to be shared with the entire world, so others could also become His special people.**

“It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever: **for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth,** and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed.”—*Exodus 31:17*.

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy . . . **For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth,** the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.”—*Exodus 20:8, 11*.

“**He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered.**”—*Psalms 111:4*.

**Since the purpose of the Sabbath was to remember God as the Creator, if it had always been faithfully kept, there would be no atheists or idolaters today.**

Another example of something done to commemorate a great event occurred when Joshua had men carry stones from the center of the Jordan river in flood stage, after the people had miraculously crossed over it—as a perpetual memorial.

“And these stones shall be for **a memorial** unto the children of Israel forever.”—*Joshua 4:7*.

“And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, **What mean these stones?** Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land.”—*Joshua 4:21-22*.

#### THE SIGN OF HIS REDEEMING POWER

The Bible also tells us that the Sabbath is not only the sign of His creatorship and rulership,—**but also the sign of His redeeming power to save those who submit to His rule.**

“Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; **that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.**”—*Exodus 31:13*.

What a glorious promise is this! **God wants to use the seventh-day Sabbath as part of His plan to save us from sin!**

“Moreover also I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, **that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.**”—*Ezekiel 20:12*.

**Like the work of creation itself, sanctification also requires creative power.** For, with their

cooperation, God changes sinful men into humble, obedient children whom He can take to heaven. But if they pull back and rebel against His authority, He cannot work these changes in their lives.

**“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”—Psalm 51:10.**

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”—*John 3:3*.

**“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.”—Ephesians 2:10.**

As God rested from His creative works on the seventh day, so the believer rests from his activities and, on the Sabbath, enters into the rest of God. **The Sabbath is the sign of this rest which we enter into.** Paul mentions this in Hebrews 4:4-10.

**The Sabbath, which is the memorial of God’s creative power, will never cease to exist.**

**When this sinful world will end, and life in God’s sinless world shall begin—God’s faithful ones will continue keeping the Sabbath.**

“For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and **from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me**, saith the Lord.”—*Isaiah 66:22-23*.

**So the holy Sabbath is the sign of creatorship, rulership, and fellowship,—and also the sign of God’s plan to redeem His faithful ones so they can live with Him forever.**

**He who would dare to attempt to abolish the Bible Sabbath—is directly challenging God the Creator and Redeemer, who gave the Sabbath to mankind.**

***D.L. Moody wrote this:***

**“The Sabbath was binding in Eden, and it has been in force ever since.** This fourth commandment begins with the word ‘remember,’ showing that the Sabbath already existed when God wrote this law on the tables of stone at Sinai. **How can men claim that this one commandment has been done away with when they will admit that the other nine are still binding?”**—*D.L. Moody, Weighed and Wanting, pp. 46-47.*

#### **THE FORTY-YEAR TEST OF OBEDIENCE**

**A special test came to God’s people before they arrived at Mount Sinai,** where the Ten Commandments were written on stone tablets.

**All of the commandments, including the Sabbath commandment, had been known ever since Eden. So God tested the Israelites.** He said He would give them “bread from heaven” (called

manna), and the people should go out and gather it daily,—but they should not go out and gather any on the Sabbath.

“Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, **that I may prove them, whether they will walk in My law, or no.**

“And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; **and it shall be twice as much** as they gather daily.”—*Exodus 16:4-5*.

“And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, **Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath** unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.”—*Exodus 16:22-23*.

**But some of the people went out on the Sabbath to collect more manna, thus violating God’s command.**

“And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none.

**“And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep My commandments and My laws?”**

“See, for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.”—*Exodus 16:27-29*.

Commenting on Exodus 16:4-30, **Martin Luther wrote this:**

“Hence you can see that **the Sabbath was before the law of Moses came, and has existed from the beginning of the world.** Especially have the devout, who have preserved the true faith, met together and called upon God on this day.”—*Martin Luther, translated from Auslegung des Alten Testaments (Commentary on the Old Testament), in Sammtliche Schriften (Collected Writings), ed. by J.G. Walch, Vol. 3, Col. 950.*

**A striking example of how important God considered it to be that the people keep the Sabbath—is the miracle of the manna. For forty years, or 2,080 weeks, God worked a number of miracles every week, thereby pointing out the true Sabbath 2,080 times.**

God sent manna for each of the first five days of each week. That was a miracle. Then on the sixth day, He sent twice as much. Another miracle. And then on the seventh day, He sent none. It is very obvious that God wanted His people to keep the Bible Sabbath. When, after all this evidence, some went out and broke the Sabbath, He clearly showed His

will in the matter.

### CENTURIES OF DISOBEDIENCE

**It is a tragic fact that, repeatedly, God's people in Old Testament times refused to keep His moral law.** In fact, this is the great lesson we discover, over and over again, all through the Old Testament! As a result, they suffered great affliction.

In the time of Jeremiah, God promised to greatly bless the Israelites if they would remain loyal to Him.

"And it shall come to pass, **if ye diligently hearken unto Me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein**, then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: **and this city shall remain forever.**"—*Jeremiah 17:24-25*.

What a glorious promise that was! **But then followed a prediction of what would happen if they refused to keep the Bible Sabbath:**

"But if ye will not hearken unto Me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; **then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.**"—*Jeremiah 17:27*.

**This prediction was exactly fulfilled!** Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came and destroyed Jerusalem—and **the Word of God said it was because the inhabitants refused to keep the Sabbath!**

"And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia:

**"To fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill threescore and ten years."**—*2 Chronicles 36:18-21*.

Years later, after returning from Babylon, Nehemiah warned the people to not again forsake the Sabbath,—lest the city be destroyed again!

"Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day? **Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath.**"—*Nehemiah*

*iah 13:17-18.*

### HE LOVED US TO THE DEATH

The cross of Calvary upheld, between heaven and earth, the Upholder of the universe. **Bound to its rough wood were the hands that had made the worlds and set the stars in limitless space, hands that had made the very wood in the cross on which He hung.**

"He had a way with wood, He touched the cross's ugly span, Barren and bloodstained where it stood, And built a bridge from God to man."

He touched that cross and stayed there for you and me. **If we love Him, we will obey Him! We will not, as others do, study our convenience or what others will think of us.**

As the poem says:

" 'Twas not the nails, but His wondrous love for me, kept My Lord on the cross of Calvary. Oh, what power could hold Him there—All my sin and shame to bear? Not the nails, *but His wondrous love—for me!*"

### MY COMMITMENT

Oh, kindly Father, I had no idea that this truth was so beautiful! Thou dost have such a wonderful plan for our lives. My precious Jesus died to uphold the moral law—and here the Bible Sabbath is in the heart of it! I want the Sabbath in my life! I want to keep it holy! Help me, I pray, to be able to do so. In the name of my Lord and Saviour, I ask it. Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—We next want to learn what Jesus, while here on earth, thought about the Bible Sabbath. Did He obey it Himself? Did He tell His disciples to obey it? Did He want them to obey it after His death on Calvary? These are important truths.

# The Sabbath of Jesus

*Learning about the Lord's Day*

**A man who did not believe in Christ, and His intercession for sinners, felt miserable one evening while his wife was at prayer meeting.** Locking himself in his room, he tried to get away from his past, but he could not do so. It all rose up like a mountain on his soul.

Finally, he knelt down and, because he did not believe in Jesus Christ, asked God to forgive His sins; but there was no response.

Afterward, telling what happened, he said, "I did not say "for Jesus' sake," for I was a Unitarian and did believe that He had died for me."

**Then in utter desperation, he cried, "Please God, I accept Jesus as my Saviour. For His sake, please—forgive my sins!"** Immediately, a peace of heart flowed into his soul. In the days and months to come, he still had much to learn and he faithfully began searching God's Word, and obeying the truths he found, in the strength of Christ, until he discovered the Bible Sabbath. **The more he searched God's Word, the more he discovered, and the deeper became his peace and his connection to Jesus Christ.**

We can be thankful that the Word of God, if carefully studied, will clearly direct men on the pathway to heaven.

## CHRIST'S SPECIAL DAY

**The Bible definitely states that Christ has a special day.** We want to learn what it is. First, let us read Revelation 1:10.

**"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day."**—*Revelation 1:10.*

**There is nothing in Revelation 1:10 that tells us what day that is.** Some think it is Sunday, the first day of the week. *But only the Bible can tell us.* And it gives us the answer over and over again!

The Fourth Commandment clearly explains it.

**"But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God."**—*Exodus 20:10.*

But there are many other passages which say the same thing.

**The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord is mentioned six times in the Bible!** Here they are: Exodus 16:26; 23:12; 31:15; 35:2; Leviticus 23:3; and Deuteronomy 5:14.

**The only day which the Bible has ever mentioned as being the Lord's day is the seventh day**

**of the week.** The expression found in Isaiah 58:13 is a good example of this:

"If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on **My holy day** . . . then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord."—*Isaiah 58:13-14.*

God is here describing the seventh-day Sabbath.

What day is the "Lord's day" in the Scriptures? The Bible tells us that **the Sabbath is the day unto the Lord** (*Exodus 16:23, 25; 31:15; 35:2*). **It is the day of the Lord** (*Exodus 20:10; Leviticus 23:3; Deuteronomy 5:14*), **and His own day—His holy day** (*Isaiah 58:13*).

Jesus called Himself the Lord of the Sabbath.

**"The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath."**—*Mark 2:28.*

The Apostle John speaks of it as "the Lord's day" (*Revelation 1:10*).

**"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day."**—*Revelation 1:10.*

**John well knew which day was the Lord's day.**

This day is the memorial day of the Creator (*Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 31:17*), and the memorial day of the Redeemer (*Ezekiel 20:12, 20*).

**It is the Lord's Day! God's own day. A day He wants to share with you.**

Don't refuse Him. He wants to give you better things than you could ever give yourself. **Do not try to make a sabbath out of something man-made that others offer you. Choose instead the best—the only Sabbath God ever gave to mankind—the seventh-day Sabbath.**

## CHRIST MADE THE SABBATH

How did Christ become Lord of the Sabbath?

The reason Jesus claims the Sabbath as belonging to Him is because, **in the beginning, God and Christ worked together in the Creation of the world. Jesus made the Sabbath and gave it to us!**

"God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son . . . by whom also He made the worlds."—*Hebrews 1:1-2.*

"To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."—*Ephesians 3:9.*

In other words, the same Christ who came to this earth to redeem man worked closely with God the Father in creating all things in the beginning. This truth is taught again and again.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. **All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made.** . . . He was in the world, and the world was made by Him."—*John 1:1-3, 10.*

**“God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.”—Ephesians 3:9.**

“Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. **For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth,** visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.”—*Colossians 1:15-17*.

**Christ was the active agent in creation.** The Creator rested on the seventh day from the work of creation. **Therefore, Christ must have rested on the seventh day with the Father. So it is His rest day as well as the Father’s.**

How thankful we can be that Jesus shares His Sabbath with us! Since God’s children are members of His family (*Ephesians 3:14-15*), we would expect that they would have special fellowship with Him on His rest day. **So it is not only the Sabbath of God, but also of man.**

“The Sabbath was made for man.”—*Mark 2:27*.

Christ, who was born into the human race, is the Son of man who died that we might inherit eternal life. He is also Lord of the Sabbath.

“The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.”—*Mark 2:28*.

#### **IS OUR SEVENTH DAY THE SAME AS CHRIST’S SEVENTH DAY?**

**But now we come to a very important question: Is the seventh day of the week in Christ’s time, the same as it is in our time?**

The little town of Nazareth is located on the most southerly of the mountain ranges of southern Galilee. Quietly it lies nestled on the side of a shallow ridge that runs in the shape of a horseshoe. Here, among the dwellings and groves of this small town, is where Jesus grew to manhood.

But, just now, come back with me in imagination to that village, where so many years ago, the Master walked among men. Another day is quietly dawning, as the early rising sun chases away the bright mists that hang over the slope of Nazareth. From the home of the carpenter, Jesus steps forth and walks to the little church in the center of town. It is Sabbath in Nazareth on this morning!

**Oh, how much you and I would like to go to church with Jesus! And, perhaps more important—how much we would like to go to church on the same weekly Sabbath that He kept!** What peace of heart this would bring to us, to be able to keep the Sabbath of Jesus!

**And, my friend, we can. For we know enough from Biblical, historical and other records, that we today can know of a certainty the Sabbath of**

**Jesus.**

#### **TRACING THE WEEKLY CYCLE**

**In order to trace back to the Sabbath of Jesus, we must know the truth about the weekly cycle itself.** Here are the facts:

The seven-day week, as well as the Bible Sabbath that terminates it, both originated during Creation Week. **But has that weekly cycle changed down through the centuries?**

We are going to discover that **God has guarded both the Sabbath and the weekly cycle of seven days.** It is because the seventh-day Sabbath has been kept by God’s people—ever since Eden—that we can know that the weekly cycle has not changed.

#### **THE WEEK IN MOSES’ TIME**

**If the weekly cycle were lost between Adam’s time and Moses’, when God wrote the Ten Commandments and gave them manna for forty years,—the weekly cycle would have been corrected at that time.**

#### **THE WEEK IN JESUS’ TIME**

For all the centuries from Moses to Christ, there were Jews who faithfully kept it. But if the Sabbath could possibly have been lost between Moses’ time and Jesus’ time, **we would have the example of the Saviour Himself to guide us as to the correctness of the weekly cycle—and the Sabbath day—when He was on earth.**

Scripture tells us, “He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked” (*1 John 2:6*). Throughout His earthly life, Jesus gave “us an example, that ye should follow His steps” (*1 Peter 2:21*). And Jesus’ steps were obedient in Sabbath observance.

“As His custom was” (*Luke 4:16, 31*), Jesus kept the Bible Sabbath according to the commandment.

“If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love.”—*John 15:10*.

**If the Sabbath had been lost, Jesus would have found it for His followers. They would have known which day of the week was the correct Sabbath.**

Jesus was crucified on the sixth day of the week, which was the day before the Sabbath. We today would call it “Friday.” On this same sixth day, which was also called the “preparation day,” His followers prepared “spices and ointments” to anoint His body for burial, but then stopped when sundown came, “and rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.”

“And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on. And the women also, which came

with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how His body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; **and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.**—*Luke 23:54-56.*

This is an important fact, for **it is obvious that Jesus never told His followers to stop keeping the Bible Sabbath, and that they knew which day to keep holy!**—They wanted so badly to anoint His body with precious ointment; but, because it was almost sunset, they went home, planning to try to do it Sunday morning.

**In death, Jesus rested in the tomb on the seventh day, the Sabbath** (*Matthew 28:1-7*). Then, “as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week” (*Matthew 28:1*), **Christ arose on the first working day in the week—for He had a lot of things to tend to.** It was the first day of a new, working week, the day after the Bible Sabbath.

“He will magnify the law and make it honorable.”—*Isaiah 42:21.*

Truly, throughout His life, Jesus magnified the importance of keeping God’s Ten Commandment law!

#### **TO BE KEPT NEARLY 40 YEARS LATER**

In fact, when He gave His prophecy of the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, **Christ warned His disciples that—even in the midst of that terrible crisis—nearly forty years later—they should continue sacredly observing the Bible Sabbath.**

“**But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day.**”—*Matthew 24:20.*

—**Yet that destruction did not occur until A.D. 70—nearly a half-century after Christ’s death on the cross!** Jonathan Edwards, a leading Protestant revivalist in the eighteenth-century American Colonies, wrote this:

“Christ is here speaking of the flight of the apostles and other Christians out of Jerusalem and Judea, just before their final destruction . . . But the final destruction of Jerusalem was after the dissolution of the Jewish constitution, and after the Christian dispensation was fully set up. Yet it is plainly implied in these words of the Lord, that even then—40 years later—Christians would still be bound to a strict observation of the Sabbath.”—*Jonathan Edwards, Works, Vol. 4, pp. 621-622.*

**It is an astounding fact that the week only exists because God made our world and gave us the Bible Sabbath!**

“In connection only with the week is religion obviously the explanation of its origin, and the week only is uniformly attributed to command of God. **The week exists because of the Sabbath.** It is

historically and scientifically true that the Sabbath was made by God.”—*W.O. Carver, Sabbath Observance, pp. 34-35; published 1940 by the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.*

#### **THE WEEKLY CYCLE FROM CHRIST’S TIME TO OURS**

**But could the weekly cycle have been changed after the death and resurrection of Christ? Here are the facts about this:**

**The Julian calendar was in use when Jesus Christ was upon the earth.** Its originator, Julius Caesar, died March 14, 44 B.C., several decades before Christ was born. **This calendar which continued in use for fifteen centuries was not accurate in the length of its year,** being nearly one quarter of an hour too long. What it needed was our method of “leap years.” By 1582, the vernal equinox of March 21 had receded to March 11, or was 10 days off schedule.

**Yet all this time, the length of the week had not changed. Through God’s providential care, the weekly cycle has remained unchanged since the Creation of our world.**

A change was made to correct the length of the year at the time that Gregory XIII was the pope, and so it was called the *Gregorian calendar*. **This new calendar began to function on Friday, October 5, 1582. Friday the 5th was changed to the 15th. October 1582 only had 21 days. But in all of this, the week remained untouched, and the days of the week were undisturbed.** On a nearby page is what the calendar looked like that particular month:

**Folk in Portugal who retired to sleep on Thursday, October 4, awoke the next morning on Friday the 15th.** Some nations began the use of the new calendar at once. This included Spain, Portugal and Italy. France waited until December to adopt it. Part of Germany made the changeover in 1583 and the rest of the nation waited until 1700. About that time the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark also accepted it. Then in 1752, England and the American Colonies made the changeover. By that time eleven days had to be changed, instead of ten. Wednesday, September 2 was followed by Thursday, September 14. Russia and Greece continued to use the old style calendar—the Julian Calendar—for over a hundred and fifty more years. Finally in 1919, Romania, Serbia, and Turkey changed to the new calendar, and Soviet Russia made the change soon after. By then there was a 14-day difference.

**For 337 years, the calendars of Europe were mixed up—with dates which were totally confused. But all this time the days of the week were alike everywhere! They had never**

**changed.**

That which the *Encyclopedia Britannica* called the “unalterable uniformity” of the week has never been affected by calendar changes. And because of this, the seven-day week, given by God at the Creation has never been touched by the calendar changes of mankind.

#### **EVEN MORE POWERFUL EVIDENCE**

**But there is yet even more powerful evidence that the weekly cycle has never changed, and the seventh day today is the same that it was in the time of Christ, and back to the time of Moses** when manna was sent only on six days, and the finger of God etched the commandments on stone.

**Our heavenly Father has given us more than written proof;—He has given us living proof—the Jewish race.**

Nearly every other Near Eastern ethnic group has disappeared: the Hittites, Sumarians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Moabites, and Philistines—all are gone.

**But the Jews remain—and with them the Bible Sabbath.** It has been 3,400 years since they arrived at Mount Sinai—but all during those long centuries, down to the time of Christ and beyond to our own time, they have been keeping the Sabbath. Week after week, month after month, year after year, century after century.

**Ask any Jewish acquaintance what day is the Sabbath. He will tell you that it is Saturday—the seventh day.**

Orthodox Jews, scattered throughout the world, have kept strict record of time. They have carefully obeyed the Sabbath commandment down through the ages. The existence and testimony of the Jewish race is alone enough to settle the matter.

#### **HISTORIANS AND ASTRONOMERS AGREE**

But there are others who have kept records also:

**Historians have amassed an accurate record of time. Astronomers have also kept careful records, and theirs is one of the most accurate that you will find anywhere.**

And then we have the calendars themselves. **All calendars agree. There is no evidence whatsoever to support the false claim that “time has been lost.”** The standard reference works all tell us the same thing: No time has been lost in the weekly cycle. An example of this is to be found in all the major encyclopedias, and the reports of astronomers.

“The week is a period of seven days . . . It has been employed from time immemorial.”—*The Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th Edition, Vol. 4, p. 988, art. “Calendar.”

**“In the various changes of the calendar, there**

**has been no change in the seven day rota of the week,** which has come down from very early times.”—(signed) F.W. Dyson, Astronomer Royal, Royal Observatory, Greenwich, London. Letter dated March 4, 1932.

“There has been no change in our calendar in past centuries that has affected in any way the cycle of the week.”—(Signed) James Robertson, Director American Ephemeris, Navy Department, U.S. Naval Observatory, Washington, D.C. Letter dated March 12, 1932.

**In the official League of Nations Report on the Calendar**, published at Geneva, August 17, 1926, are the following statements from leading astronomers:

**“The week has been followed for thousands of years and therefore has been hallowed by immemorial use.”**—Anders Dooner (formerly Professor of Astronomy), University of Helsingfors, p. 51.

“I have always hesitated to suggest breaking the continuity of the week, which without a doubt is the most ancient scientific institute bequeathed to us by antiquity.”—Edouard Baillaud (Director of the Paris Observatory), p. 52.

“In spite of all of our dickerings with the calendar, it is patent that the human race never lost the septenary [seven day] sequence of week days and that **the Sabbath of these latter times comes down to us from Adam, through the ages, without a single lapse.**”—Dr. Toten, Professor of Astronomy, Yale University.

“The continuity of the week has crossed the centuries and all known calendars,—still intact.”—Professor D. Eginitis, Director of the Greek Observatory in Athens, Greece.

“Having been time calculator at Greenwich for many years, I can testify . . . that **this daily period of rotation does not vary one-thousandth part of a second in thousands of years . . . Consequently, it can be said with assurance that not a day has been lost since Creation**, and all the calendar changes notwithstanding, **there has been no break in the weekly cycle.**”—Frank Jeffries, Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, and Research Director of the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, England.

#### **SUMMARY**

**In summary, we have learned four important facts:** First, **Jesus Christ faithfully kept the Bible Sabbath and commanded His followers to keep it** after His death and resurrection. Second, **the Sabbath He kept was the same day that Moses kept and God commanded** on Mount Sinai. Third, **there has been no change in the weekly cycle all through the centuries.** Fourth,—**you and I can keep the same Sabbath that Jesus kept!**

“O day of sweet reflection, thou art a day of love; A day to raise affection from earth to things above.

New graces ever gaining from this our day of rest, We seek the rest remaining, in mansions of the blest."

**The Sabbath is God's flag, the symbol of His sovereignty**, woven in the loom of heaven, and raised over His newly completed creation of our world. And today, after the passing of long years, it still remains the symbol of His right to rule as Creator and Redeemer.

#### **IN THE LAST DAYS AND THROUGHOUT ETERNITY**

**And there are two more wonderful truths:** First, it is predicted that, in spite of all the earlier attempts to destroy knowledge of it, **God will have a people on earth in the last days who will keep the Bible Sabbath.**

"And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: **thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, the repairer of the breach**, the restorer of paths to dwell in.

"If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

"Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."—*Isaiah 58:12-14*.

Second, **God's faithful ones will keep this same seventh-day Sabbath in the New Earth!**

**"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."**—*Revelation 22:14*.

**"For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make**, shall remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and **from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord.**"—*Isaiah 66:22-23*.

**What a glorious future opens up before us, to be accounted as God's faithful children who love and obey Him** and trust in Jesus for enabling strength to keep His commandments. One day soon God's faithful ones will enter through the gates into the City and live eternally with Christ!

"Safely through another week, God has brought us on our way; Let us now a blessing seek, Waiting in His courts today; Day of all the week the best, Emblem of eternal rest."

#### **MY COMMITMENT**

Dear Father, since Jesus said the Bible Sabbath was important, I must faithfully keep it,—for I ever want to do that which will please Jesus. He has done so much for me! Please accept this commitment, in His name, Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—Since God the Father and God the Son considered the Bible Sabbath to be an essential part of the unchangeable Ten Commandment law, no disciple or Apostle would dare try to change it to some other day. We will now learn exactly what Christ's disciples, as well as the Apostles, thought of it. Did they cherish and obey it after Christ's death on the cross?

Complete Evangelistic Sermon: Chapter Twenty-Five

# The Sabbath of the Apostles

*Is Sunday Sacredness in the Bible?*

## THE SABBATH OF CHRIST'S DISCIPLES

**Among the disciples of Christ, none were more faithful than those that were present at His burial, and two days later when He arose from the dead.**

Four were women who with the Apostle John stood at the cross in sad vigil as Jesus suffered and died.

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene . . . and the disciple standing by, whom He loved."—*John 19:25-26*.

As the body of Jesus was laid in the grave, these women were there, along with the close friends who buried Him.

"And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on. And the women also, which came with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how His body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment."—*Luke 23:54-56*.

(Notice that **these verses teach that the Sabbath is the day between Friday and Sunday, and that Christ rested in the tomb on the Bible Sabbath, and then arose on Sunday** to begin His activities again on behalf of the human race. While He rested in the tomb, they rested at home.)

**Here were the closest friends of Jesus—yet they were very careful to keep the Bible Sabbath.**

By the time that Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea had, on the sixth day, arranged the burial of Jesus, the sun had almost set on that fateful day of the week. "The Sabbath drew on." **They knew that, according to Bible reckoning, the Sabbath begins at evening; that is, sunset.**

This pattern was first given us during Creation Week: Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31. "And the evening and the morning were the first day," etc. It is also mentioned elsewhere.

"From even unto even, shall ye celebrate your Sabbath."—*Leviticus 23:32*.

"And at even, when the sun did set."—*Mark 1:32*.

Those women were deeply concerned to anoint Christ's body for the burial,—but **the Sabbath was about to begin, so they stopped their planned work, went home "and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment,"** with the intention

of returning to complete their task as soon as they could on the first day of the week, which would be Sunday morning. For it would be the beginning of another work week.

But their hearts were heavy, for not only was Jesus dead, but as they were leaving on Friday afternoon, they saw an immense stone rolled in front of the entrance to the tomb. How could they get the stone rolled away after the Sabbath ended?

"And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him. And **very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.** And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?"—*Mark 16:1-3*.

To their utter astonishment, when they arrived, they found the stone rolled away—and the tomb empty.

**Let no one tell you that Christ had taught His followers to keep the first day of the week—Sunday—holy! For it simply is not true. Christ did not change any of the Ten Commandments.**

Indeed, instead He commanded His disciples to make sure they kept the Bible Sabbath nearly forty years after His death and resurrection, even amid the terrible crisis of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70! "But pray ye that your flight be not . . . on the Sabbath day" (*Matthew 24:20*).

It should be noted that **Christ's other disciples, including John and Peter, also carefully kept the Bible Sabbath. They also did not return to the tomb until Sunday morning** (*Luke 24:12; Mark 16:1-2*).

## THE SABBATH OF PAUL

But now, let us turn our attention to the Apostle Paul. **Surely, as the apostle to the Gentiles, if any of the apostles observed Sunday, it would be Paul.**

Paul was God's special chosen messenger to the Gentiles. As such **he would be careful to set before them correct principles of Sabbath observance. Was Paul faithful in keeping the Bible Sabbath?**

Arriving at Antioch (where the followers of Christ were first called "Christians"; *Acts 11:26*), Paul "went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day" (*Acts 13:14*). There he delivered a powerful appeal for everyone to accept Christ as the Saviour of the world.

Then came the Gentiles, and "besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath" (*verse 42*).

**There is no word or hint that Paul stopped keeping the seventh-day Sabbath in order to reach the Gentiles.**

Later called to Philippi in Macedonia, Paul and

his company “on the Sabbath . . . went out of the city by a riverside, where prayer was wont to be made” (*Acts 16:13*). **This was a Sabbath service that Christ’s followers regularly attended. There is no word of controversy about the Sabbath, or any effort to get people to keep another day.**

Thessalonica was the next stop.

“And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.”—*Acts 17:2-3*.

Paul preached Christ crucified and risen. **No argument about the Sabbath. No new day was proposed. “As his manner was,” he went to church on the Sabbath.**

Persecution drove him to Berea, and from there to Athens. Finally, he arrived in Corinth, where he remained for eighteen months. The Scriptures tell us that **throughout that entire time—a full year and a half,—as he always did, Paul carefully kept the Bible Sabbath.**

“After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth . . . And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks . . . **And he continued there a year and six months,** teaching the Word of God among them.”—*Acts 18:1, 4, 11*.

**Just in these few Scriptures alone, we find that Paul kept the Sabbath 84 times; all the while preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.** It was his custom to keep the Bible Sabbath, as it was the custom of Jesus, who at Damascus called him to preach to the Gentiles.

In fact, Paul knew no other Sabbath. He regularly kept the Sabbath and preached for a year and a half at this city, and encouraged others to keep it,—yet **Paul was at Corinth a full 23 years after the cross.**

In Hebrews 4:4, the Sabbath is once again mentioned by Paul: “For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, **And God did rest the seventh day from all His works.**” And in verse 9, he declares: “**There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.**” Verse 10 tells us that to enter into “His rest,” we must cease from our work as God did from His. This is obviously referring to how God rested on the seventh day of Creation Week and blessed it for our use.

God rested on the seventh day of Creation Week, not on the first day. The first day is not God’s rest day. Therefore it can never be the Sabbath of rest for the people of God.

Throughout his ministry, **Paul preached Christ as the Saviour who alone could enable men to keep God’s moral law. Repeatedly, Paul taught that, apart from Christ’s strengthening grace,**

**men were not able to resist temptation and sin, and obey God’s law.**

“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”—*Acts 13:38-39*.

“But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.”—*Acts 24:14*.

**“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”—Romans 3:31.**

“What shall we say then? **Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.** How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”—*Romans 6:1-2*.

**“What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.** Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”—*Romans 6:15-16*.

As the above verse explains, **when, through the enabling grace of Christ, we obey the Ten Commandments, we are not under the condemnation of the law, but instead, we are in a state of humble, enabled obedience. We are under grace—living a life in daily resistance of temptation and sin.**

“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart . . . **Being then made free from sin,** ye became the servants of righteousness.”—*Romans 6:17-18*.

**Paul clarified that the moral law leads men to Christ, who then enables them to obey it; at the same time he spoke not one word against the keeping of the Bible Sabbath—which is in the heart of that Ten Commandment law.**

#### THE SABBATH OF JAMES

**The Apostle James was very strong in his defense of the moral law of God.** In all that he said, there was no hint that any part of the Ten Commandments had been changed.

**“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.** For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. **So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.**”—*James 2:10-12*.

**What does James mean in calling the Ten Commandments the “law of liberty”? There are those who declare that freedom from law provides them with the greatest “liberty.” When enough people**

who believed that error got together in 1793, the result was misery to millions and death to thousands in the French Revolution—a revolt against God and His laws.

**In reality, disobedience to God's moral law results in slavery to sin and Satan.**

**In stark contrast, only God's "law of liberty" (James 2:12), the Ten Commandments, can free a man to live a happy, worthwhile life in this world, and inherit a home in the next.**

In his day, Paderiski was one of the greatest concert pianists in the world. Yet most of us could sit down at his piano and bang on it all we wanted, and only make noise. Although we might imagine ourselves "liberated" from being guided by the rules of piano playing, Paderiski was obedient to them. **His obedience to those rules enabled him to enter upon a level of genuine liberty at the piano which you and I cannot experience.**

**Obedience to God's moral law enables us to truly control ourselves and become all that He wants us to be.**

#### THE SABBATH OF JOHN

In the first chapter of Revelation, **the Apostle John was careful to mention that it was on the "Lord's day" that Christ appeared to him in vision on the Isle of Patmos. The only day in Scripture that the Lord ever said was His is the Bible Sabbath.** And, in various ways, He said this repeatedly.

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day."—*Revelation 1:10*.

The Fourth Commandment clearly explains what day this is:

"But **the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.**"—*Exodus 20:10*.

**The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord is mentioned six times in the Bible:** Exodus 16:26; 23:12; 31:15; 35:2; Leviticus 23:3; and Deuteronomy 5:14.

**The only day which the Bible has ever mentioned as being the Lord's day is the seventh day of the week.** The expression found in Isaiah 58:13 is a good example of this:

"If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on **My holy day** . . . then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord."—*Isaiah 58:13-14*.

What day is the "Lord's day" in the Scriptures? The Bible tells us that the Sabbath is *the day unto the Lord* (*Exodus 16:23, 25; 31:15; 35:2*). It is *the day of the Lord* (*Exodus 20:10; Leviticus 23:3; Deuteronomy 5:14*), and *His own day—His holy day* (*Isaiah 58:13*).

**Jesus called Himself the Lord of the Sabbath.**

"The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath."

*Mark 2:28.*

The Apostle John speaks of it as "the Lord's day" (*Revelation 1:10*).

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day."—*Revelation 1:10*.

**John well knew which day was the Lord's day. This day is the memorial day of the Creator** (*Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 31:17*), and the memorial day of the Redeemer (*Ezekiel 20:12, 20*).

It is the Lord's Day! God's own day. The day which He wants to share with us.

**Repeatedly in his writings, the Apostle John declared that men must obey the moral law of God, which has the Bible Sabbath in its heart.** Here are a few of those passages:

"He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." *1 John 2:6*.

"And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. **He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.** But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him. He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked."—*1 John 2:3-6*.

"And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure. **Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.**

"And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. **Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not:** whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous."—*1 John 3:3-7*.

"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments. **For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments:** and His commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world."—*1 John 5:2-4*.

And we do not want to forget these other words of truth in the book of Revelation, penned by the Apostle John:

**The remnant of believers, in the last days, will be distinguished by the fact that they keep all ten of God's commandments! —And they do it by the enabling grace of Christ!**

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with **the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God**, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."—*Revelation 12:17*.

"Here is the patience of the saints: **here are they that keep the commandments of God**, and the faith of Jesus."—*Revelation 14:12*.

**The promise is rich and abundant. Those who**

**faithfully obey God—will inherit eternal life!**

**“Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”—Revelation 22:14.**

#### **SUNDAY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

We have learned that the seventh-day Sabbath was faithfully kept by Christ's followers after the cross. The Sabbath of the New Testament is the Sabbath of Creation. **Nowhere in Scripture had Sunday, the first day of the week been substituted for the seventh day. From Matthew to Revelation no record of any such change can be found.**

The example and writings of Christ and the Apostles testify that no such change was ever made or even contemplated by them. **Those who observe another day as a day of rest and worship do so without any Scriptural warrant whatsoever, and fail to honor the memorial of Christ's creative and redeeming power.**

**It is a solid fact that the character of God and His moral law never change.** His moral standard is always the same. Changing ages, and the fallible customs of men, have had no effect on the law that is the foundation of God's kingdom.

**In 1884, a Roman Catholic priest, Thomas Enright, CSSR, of Des Moines, Iowa (formerly president of Redemptorist College, Kansas City, Missouri) offered a thousand dollars to anyone who could give him one verse from the Bible which said that the sanctity of the Bible Sabbath had been transferred to Sunday.** He also offered to give it to anyone who could prove from the Bible that Sunday, the first day of the week, should be observed as a holy day. He later declared:

**“The Bible says ‘Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,’ but the Catholic Church says, ‘No, keep the first day of the week,’ and all the world bows down in silent obedience to the mandates of the Catholic Church!”—Priest Thomas Enright, CSSR president of Redemptorist College, Kansas City, Mo., in a lecture at Hartford, Kansas, February 18, 1884, and published in *The American Sentinel* R.C. journal, June 1893, p. 173.**

**As you might expect, this challenge provoked widespread comment. But no one ever claimed the reward.**

It is very clear that all of Christ's disciples, as well as His Apostles, remained true to the Bible Sabbath, and never taught that men should keep any other day. Indeed, they would have no right to do so, for only the Creator, the Lawgiver, would have a right to change His law!

**But then, where did Sunday sacredness come**

**from?** If any Christians were keeping it before the last book of the Bible ended, we should surely be able to find it in the Word of God.

**The question before us here is this: What does the Bible say about the first day of the week?** There are **nine passages** which mention the first day of the week:

#### **The first one is in Genesis.**

“And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. **And the evening and the morning were the first day.**”—*Genesis 1:3-5.*

Nothing here about the first day being sacred.

#### **The second one is in Matthew.**

“In the end of the Sabbath, **as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week,** came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.”—*Matthew 28:1.*

The two women had come to Christ's tomb on Sunday morning with the specific purpose of anointing His body. They had not been able to do it Friday afternoon, because the Bible Sabbath was about to begin, and, as were all of Christ's followers, they were careful to faithfully keep the Sabbath.

Notice in the above verse that **the Bible Sabbath ended before the first day of the week began. This clearly shows that the two are distinct from one another, and not the same! There is no slightest hint of any sacredness attached to the first day of the week in this verse.** Matthew wrote his book several years after the resurrection of Christ.

#### **The third and fourth are in Mark.**

**“And when the Sabbath was past,** Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him. **And very early in the morning the first day of the week,** they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.”—*Mark 16:1-2.*

“Now when Jesus was risen **early the first day of the week,** He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils.”—*Mark 16:9.*

Here again there is no word from Christ, but only Mark's record of the resurrection. **The Sabbath was past before the first day came. They are two different days! One is holy; the other is one of the six working days.** After the Sabbath was past, the women arrived, carrying a jar of ointment so they could tend to some work. But Jesus, risen from the dead, also had work to do this first working day of the week.

Thus we see that many years after the resurrection of Christ, when Mark wrote his book, he knew

of no Sunday sacredness.

***The fifth one is in Luke.***

"Now **upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning**, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them."—*Luke 24:1*.

As with the other Gospel writers, **Luke gives no mention in his book that Jesus ever said anything about Sunday sacredness.**

But he points out, in the two preceding verses, that **Jesus' followers rested on the Bible Sabbath "according to the commandment."**

"And the women also, which came with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how His body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment."—*Luke 23:55-56*.

Naturally, **that was according to the Fourth of the Ten Commandments.**

***The sixth one is in John.***

"**The first day of the week** cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre."—*John 20:1*.

John gives the same story, a simple record of that early morning experience.

Notice that **it was still "dark," although it was the first day of the week. This is because, according to the Bible pattern, each day ends at sunset and the next day begins.**

Christ's disciples knew that, according to Bible reckoning, the Sabbath begins at evening; that is, sunset.

This pattern was first given during Creation Week (*Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31*). "And the evening and the morning were the first day," etc. It is also mentioned elsewhere.

"From even unto even, shall ye celebrate your Sabbath."—*Leviticus 23:32*.

"And at even, when the sun did set."—*Mark 1:32*.

So when the sun set the night before, the first day of the week began. **Very early the next morning, while it was still dark, Christ arose and the two women arrived at the tomb.**

***The seventh one is also in John.***

"Then **the same day at evening, being the first day of the week**, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you."—*John 20:19*.

Here again **there is no indication that Jesus ever mentioned the first day of the week as being anything important.**

There are some who say that this was a Sunday church service! But read again what it says: **The**

**disciples were huddled in that upper room, "for fear of the Jews."** They were trying to hide out, lest they be the next to be slain by the murderous Pharisees.

But Jesus knew where they were hiding, and He suddenly appeared there before them.

It has been said that they were celebrating Christ's resurrection; but, **up to the time that He appeared before them, they still did not believe that Jesus had risen.**

Mark makes this unmistakably clear. Mary Magdalene, having seen the resurrected Christ, told the disciples, but they "believed not" (*Mark 16:11*).

Then we are told this:

**"After that He appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.** And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them."—*Mark 16:12-13*.

Luke writes that these same two men saw Christ, and explains that, after discovering that their new friend was indeed Jesus,—they hurried back down the road to Jerusalem and went to the upper room where the disciples were hiding. But, as soon as they had told them the news that Christ was alive—Jesus suddenly stood in their midst. The entire thrilling story is in *Luke 24:13-49*. Here is a little of it:

"And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. **And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight** . . . And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them . . . **And as they thus spake, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.** But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit."—*Luke 24:30-31, 33, 36-37*.

So it is clear that the disciples had not gathered in the upper room because they believed Christ had risen from the dead. As soon as they saw Him, they were terrified.

**To the honest seeker after truth, it is clear that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, who wrote the four biographies of Christ's life and teachings, knew nothing of Sunday sacredness.** They were totally silent on the holiness of any day other than the Sabbath.

***The eighth one is in Acts.***

"**And upon the first day of the week**, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. **And there were many lights in the upper chamber**, where they were gathered together."—*Acts 20:7-8*.

Luke wrote the book of Acts, and in it gave an inspired account of the early Christian church.

**Luke recorded eighty-four Sabbath services (after Christ's ascension), and only one first-day meeting**, the one referred to in the above passage. Notice that **no holy title is used for this day. It is simple called "the first day of the week."** There is nothing here about Sunday sacredness.

*Here is the entire story of what happened here:*

Paul and his missionary companions had spent seven days at Troas (*verse 6*). **Their farewell gathering was held at night. We know this because there were lights in this upper chamber** where the meeting was held. We are told that Paul preached till midnight.

According to the Bible pattern (*Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31; Leviticus 23:32*), **the first day of the week begins at sundown** and ends Sunday night at sundown. **Since this meeting was held on the first day of the week—and it was night,—it must therefore have been held on what we call "Saturday night."** Had it been held on what we call Sunday night (after sunset on Sunday), it would have been on the second day of the week.

This was Paul's last opportunity to visit with them, so he continued speaking till midnight. *What happened after this was significant:*

"When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, **even till break of day, so he departed.** And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted. And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: **for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.** And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene."—*Acts 20:11-14*.

**On this busy Sunday, Paul's companions took ship and sailed around a point of land to Assos with all the luggage.** But Paul remained with his friends at Troas until dawn on Sunday, **and then he walked straight overland, 19 miles to Assos.** He apparently needed the exercise.

**Notice that both Paul and his companions were working on Sunday! They sailed to Assos that day, while he walked overland** and met them there. Arriving there, he boarded their ship and they headed off to Mitylene. **They considered the first day of the week a common working day**, in accordance with the commandment.

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. **Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work.**"—*Exodus 20:8-9*.

The reason for this, also given in the Fourth Commandment, is because God spent day one through six creating the world, and then rested the seventh day. He worked on the first day also.

"For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the sev-

enth day."—*Exodus 20:11*.

**The Bible is always consistent with itself!** God's plan is a beautiful one—and, if we will cooperate, we can be part of it!

**Nothing is said about this Troas meeting being a church service. Nor are we told that it was a communion service**, as some suggest. *Acts 20:7* says that they did "break bread" together, and then Paul preached. This was just a common evening meal, for **"to break bread" was the Bible expression for partaking of food.** They broke bread daily from house to house (*Acts 2:46*), and they "did eat their meat [meal, in the Greek] with gladness" (*verse 46*).

It is to be noted that even had they held the actual communion service that night, this would in no way make it a holy day. **The Lord's Supper may be celebrated on any day** (*1 Corinthians 11:26*). And, in any case, **that special service commemorates Christ's death, not His resurrection.** "Ye do show the Lord's death till He come" (*verse 26*).

**The ninth one is the only instance in all the writings of Paul!**

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. **Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store**, as God hath prospered him, **that there be no gatherings** when I come."—*1 Corinthians 16:1-2*.

Is not this remarkable? The only place in all of the Apostle Paul's books, where he even mentioned the first day of the week! **But what does it mean?**

Paul had earlier sent an urgent request to all the Christian churches in the region of Galatia (consisting primarily of Gentiles), to donate money for the poor and persecuted Christian Jews living in Jerusalem.

It is evident that **Paul was a preacher who did not like to give appeals for money from the pulpit. So he said, "that there be no gatherings when I come."** Gatherings of money, of course. **He wanted each family to set aside a certain amount ahead of time. Each family was to do this at home. "Let every one of you lay by him in store."** Another version (RSV) says, "Put something aside and save." Thus **this plan had no connection with a weekly collection at a church service. Quite to the contrary, this money was to be laid aside at home.**

In addition, it was to be on a basis of "as God hath prospered." How simple and clear is the picture.

A church member runs a small shop all week, let us say. **Friday afternoon he closes early enough to prepare for the Sabbath. There is no time to tally up his money and figure accounts.**

**But when the Sabbath is past, and the first day of the week comes, he is to check his net earnings and lay aside a proper sum, not at church, but at home.**

This text also teaches us to total up our money and figure our budgets on the first day of each week, since there is not time on Friday afternoon to do it, before the Sabbath begins at sunset.

**This last of the nine first-day texts in the Bible, like the other eight, gives no shred of evidence for a new holy day, or a regular first-day church gathering.**

**Here is a summary of what we have learned here: In the Bible, Sunday is never called the Christian Sabbath; never called the Sabbath day at all; never called the Lord's day; never even called a rest day. No sacred title whatever is applied to it. It is simply called "the first day of the week." And, by the way, the word, "Sunday," does not occur in the Bible.**

**Above and beyond all the arguments of man, stands the command of God:**

**"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work."**—Exodus 20:8-10.

I can place a small, upright post on a table. Then I can place a second, and a third. Now I can sight along these posts and they point me in a certain direction.

**We have placed post after post, as we have examined Bible verse after Bible verse,—and they all point us in the same direction.** They all point to the seventh-day of the week as the only hallowed Sabbath which God ever gave to mankind.

**The Sabbath and marriage are the only two institutions which God gave to man in the garden of Eden before his fall. And the enemy of God is determined to distort and destroy both.**

George Vandeman shares this story:

"I shall never forget the Lutheran man and his daughter who came up to me after a meeting in which this truth about the Bible Sabbath was shared. They had waited until others had gone. He was a big man, twice my size, and he took me by the lapel of my coat. He simply shook, and the tears rolled down his face as he said, '*Pastor Vandeman, tell me it isn't so! Tell me it isn't so!*'"

"I knew what a shock it was to him. *But I could not tell him it isn't so. I dared not hold back truth.* The minister of the gospel whose eyes have seen the truth of this Sabbath question, who feels his responsibility before God as he leads men and women forward to judgment and eternity, cannot tell any man it isn't so. He can only say, 'God has spoken in

His Word, Will you follow?' "—George Vandeman, *Truth Makes a Difference*.

"Don't forget the Sabbath, The Lord our God hath blest, Of all the week the brightest, Of all the week the best.

"It brings repose from labor, It tells of joy divine, Its beams of light descending, With heav'nly beauty shine."

## MY COMMITMENT

Kind Father, it is now clear that, from one end of the Bible to the other, the Bible Sabbath has always been the seventh day of the week. It was never changed. My resolve to obey it the rest of my life is settled. I must never abandon the Bible Sabbath for a man-made replacement. Thank you for this wonderful truth. In Christ's name, Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—The only Sabbath in the Bible was the seventh day. Yet nearly every Christian today keeps the first day of the week. Just what did happen in earlier centuries, after the Bible ended? This is the question that will be answered next.

A Complete Evangelistic Sermon: Chapter Twenty-Six

# How the Sabbath Was Changed

Historians Explain What Happened

**One of the czars of Russia while walking in his park came upon a sentry standing guard over a little patch of weeds. "What are you doing here?" he asked.**

The sentry replied, "I don't know. All I know is that the captain of the guard ordered me to stand over this spot."

The czar sent for the captain.

**"Captain! —What is this man guarding?"**

The captain answered, "All I know is that the regulations call for a sentry to be posted here."

The czar then ordered an investigation, but no one in the government of Russia could discover why that spot needed guarding. **Then they opened the royal archives, which contained historical records going back centuries.**

The archives showed that a hundred years before, in the late eighteenth century, Catherine the Great had planted a rosebush on that plot of ground and ordered a sentry posted there to keep people from trampling on it. Eventually, the rosebush died, but nobody thought to cancel the order.

**And for a hundred years men stood guard, carefully protecting something that did not need guarding.** And they didn't know why.

**Year after year. At first, no one knew how long. Guarding something that wasn't there.**

**We must open the archives of God's Word that we may understand God's will today. There are some mysteries that need to be solved.**

## MEN WOULD WANT TO MAKE CHANGES

**Millions of people are reverently keeping Sunday, the first day of the week,—yet we have discovered that there is not one slightest hint in Scripture that either God nor any Bible writer ever considered it to have the slightest sacredness. How did Sunday gain this remarkable honor?**

Searching back through the history books, we will discover that **the changeover began with the urging of half-converted Christians who wanted to "modernize" the church, and ended with church councils exalting the first day of the week—accompanied by intense persecution of those who determined to keep the true Sabbath.**

It is clear from the Bible that **if God had wanted**

**to make such a change, He would have definitely stated it in Scripture.**

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets."—*Amos 3:7*.

The change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week was not made upon any divine or Scriptural authority. **God does not alter His moral precepts.**

"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before Him."—*Ecclesiastes 3:14*.

"My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips."—*Psalms 89:34*.

"It is easier," said Jesus, "for heaven and earth to pass, than for one tittle of the law to fail" (*Luke 16:17*).

**But while the Bible gives no record of God's changing the day, historians tell how it happened after the last book in the Bible ended.**

Tragically, without any Bible authority for their actions, men have dared to tamper with the law of God, by substituting Sunday, the first day of the week, for the Bible Sabbath, the seventh day.

**In the early centuries after the Bible ended, professed Christians arose who wanted to blend Bible principles with heathen traditions. Gradually, this increased, especially from about A.D. 175 to 300.**

**Many of these half-converted pagans were living in or near Alexandria, Egypt.** Some of them started a Christian seminary, where they trained pastors. But this only spread the errors the more widely to Christian churches in other major cities.

## THIS APOSTASY HAD BEEN FORETOLD

**This great apostasy which, gradually increased after the Bible ended, had been foretold in several Bible passages:**

**"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.** Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch."—*Acts 20:29-31*.

**"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."—2 Timothy 4:3-4.**

**"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is**

worshiped; **so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.**”—2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.

**In the prophecy of Daniel 7, God had predicted that this apostasy would occur. Under the symbol of “a little horn,” a power would later arise in the world that would exalt itself against the God of heaven and would seek to destroy both God’s truth and His people.**

“I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn . . . In this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and **a mouth speaking great things.**”—Daniel 7:8.

Daniel was especially concerned about this strange little horn power.

“Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, . . . and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and **a mouth that spake very great things,** whose look was more stout than his fellows.

**“I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;** until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.”—Daniel 7:19-22.

**“And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws;** and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

“But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion.”—Daniel 7:25-26.

**“He shall think to change times and laws.” This would, of course, be God’s moral law and God’s special time—the Bible Sabbath. The little horn’s words are spoken against the “Most High,” and his efforts are to destroy the power and authority of the great Lawgiver. It was recognized that this could be best done by altering God’s law and changing the Sabbath, which is the sign of the Creator’s power.**

Because the Sabbath is the seal of the living God, by it the great moral code of Ten Commandments is stamped as belonging to God. It shows Him to be its Author, as well as the Creator of heaven and earth. **Satan knew that the best way to get rid of men’s recognition of the Creator’s authority was to do away with the Sabbath.**

#### NEW-MODELING THE CHURCH

Christ had been crucified in A.D. 31. Most of His disciples and apostles were dead by A.D. 65. John the last of the Apostles, died just before A.D. 100, after completing Revelation, the last book of

the Bible.

In the early centuries after that, **the decline of spirituality led to the adoption of many pagan rites and ceremonies by Christians “who wanted to appear modern.”** The “*mystery of iniquity*” had began its work in the church.

“Toward the latter end of the second century, many of the churches assumed a new form; the first simplicity disappeared; and insensibly, **as the old disciples retired to their graves, their children came forward and new-modeled the cause.**”—*Ecclesiastical Researches*, p. 51.

**Tragically, we will discover that modernists in the church decided to substitute the memorial day in honor of the Sun god, for the memorial day in honor of the true God, our Creator.**

In order to provide you with an accurate understanding of how this great apostasy began, *a number of statements by respected historians will be quoted.*

**We want to learn how the predicted little horn power of Daniel 7 would “think to change” the law of God and the Bible Sabbath.**

“It must be confessed that there is no law in the New Testament concerning the first day.”—*McClintock and Strong, Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Vol. 9, p. 196.

**“Until well into the second century [a hundred years after Christ] we do not find the slightest indication in our sources that Christians marked Sunday by any kind of abstention from work.”**—W. Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 157.

**“Rites and ceremonies, of which neither Paul nor Peter ever heard, crept silently into use,** and then claimed the rank of divine institutions. [Church] officers for whom the primitive disciples could have found no place, and titles which to them would have been altogether unintelligible, began to challenge attention, and to be named apostolic.”—*William D. Killen, The Ancient Church*, p. xvi.

#### THE ALLUREMENT OF SUN WORSHIP

**In the early centuries after Christ there was a struggle between the infant church and paganism. Mithraism, which was the worship of the Sun god, was a special problem. Satan had used it to counterfeit many Bible practices.**

**The first day of the week had been honored by sun worshipers for centuries. They called this day “Sun day, the “venerable day of the Sun god.”** It was on this day that they conducted their wildest and most immoral ceremonies in honor of their god.

But all the while, the worshipers of the Creator God clung to the Bible and kept the Bible Sabbath.

**There had been attempts to introduce sun worship into the church in the Old Testament.**

“Sun worship was the earliest idolatry.”—*Fausset Bible Dictionary*, p. 666.

**Satan had even tried to introduce sun worship into ancient Israel** (*Leviticus 26:30; Isaiah 17:8*). King Manasseh practiced direct Sun worship (*2 Kings 21:3, 5*). Josiah destroyed the chariots and horses dedicated to the Sun and its worship (*2 Kings 23:5, 11-12*). Sun altars and incense were burned on the housetops for the Sun (*Zephaniah 1:5*), and **Ezekiel beheld the “greatest abomination”: direct Sun worship at the entryway to the Temple of the true God. This was done by facing eastward and praying to the rising sun** (*Ezekiel 8:16-17*).

#### THE BEGINNINGS OF SUNDAY SACREDNESS IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

By the year 200, pagan compromises and practices were beginning to come into some of the Christian churches in a decided way.

**Sun worship among Christians first started in Alexandria, Egypt, which was a leading center of worldly “higher education.”** The largest pagan university was located there, and compromising Christians founded a Christian seminary to train pastors. **The bishop of the church at Rome (later called “the pope”) eagerly adopted the pagan practices adopted by the Christians at Alexandria.** He was quick to see the worldly advantage of compromise with paganism. By bringing in pagan customs, he could get more people attending church so it could become wealthier.

**About A.D. 196, Victor, bishop of the Roman church, sent out a letter** to all the Christian churches in the empire—demanding that they celebrate the resurrection of Christ on a certain Sunday every spring.

**This was the first attempt by the bishop of the church at Rome (which later became the papacy) to require Christians to keep Sunday** for some special purpose. **It also marked the first time that the bishop of Rome tried to assume authority over the other churches.** Dr. Bower, in his *History of the Popes* (Vol. 1, p. 18), said this was “the first essay of papal usurpation.”

Eventually, the name “Easter” became the name of this celebration; which was copied from the pagan spring celebration of the birth of Ishtar, a pagan goddess. (The word “Easter” in Acts 12:4 in the KJV is a mistranslation. The Greek word there is “Passover,” not “Easter.” No Christians observed “Easter” until after the Bible ended.)

#### “CHURCH GROWTH” BY COMPROMISE

**The church leaders at Alexandria and Rome recognized that, by adopting pagan customs, pagans would feel at home in the church. They**

**decided that, by switching over from holding church services on the Bible Sabbath to the pagan day of worship, the day of the Sun, the pagans would more likely start coming to church.** They succeeded all too well, for those compromising city churches became more wealthy.

“The [Catholic] Church made a sacred day of Sunday . . . largely because it was the weekly festival of the sun;—for **it was a definite policy to take over the pagan festivals endeared to the people by tradition, and give them a Christian significance.**”—*Authur Weigall, The Paganism in Our Christianity*, 1928, p. 145.

But this changeover was gradual, for **the great majority of local churches refused to modernize, and worship on Sunday.** Recognizing that compromise with paganism was a dangerous threat, those Christians who were faithful to God believed that they should only obey what the Bible said.

**“The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals was always only a human ordinance,** and it was far from the intentions of the apostles to establish a Divine command in this respect, far from them, and from the early apostolic church, to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday.”—*Augustus Neander, The History of the Christian Religion and Church*, 1843, p. 186.

**Unfortunately, by A.D. 250, paganizing customs were becoming somewhat more common in a number of Christian churches.**

#### DIRECT COMPETITION WITH MITHRA

Ancient Rome had, what was called emperor worship. But emperors were so dissolute that the heathens turned to the worship of gods and goddesses of Egypt, Babylonia, and Asia Minor. **The pagan religion which grew the fastest in popularity was Mithraism,** a religion from Persia which was the worship of the Sun god on Sunday, the first day of the week. Mithraism had absorbed rites and ceremonies from the other pagan religions, and kept increasing in the number of its adherents. It was a very attractive religion to worldlings.

**Because Mithra, the Sun god, was said to be a great warrior, most of the Roman soldiers worshiped him,** and prayed that he would help them in battle. Mithra, their unconquerable, warrior god, was named “*Sol Invictus*” (Latin for “Invincible Sun”). They also called him “*Lord Mithra*.”

Mithraites would worship a statue of Mithra stabbing a huge bull to death. **New converts were required to be “baptized”** by standing under an iron grating—while a bull, slain above them, dripped blood down upon them.

**Because their god appeared to “die” every December as the sun dipped lower in the skies,**

they said Mithra was a “dying, rising Saviour.” The first time, in its yearly cycle, that the sun would appear to be getting higher in the sky was **December 25**. So they had a great celebration on that day in honor of the birth of their Saviour. **They also had sunrise worship services on Sunday**, when they would face toward the rising sun and pray to Mithra. **These and many other counterfeits made Mithraism very similar to Christianity.**

**The special attraction of Mithraism was their Sunday worship service.** This set them apart from all other religions—until compromising Christians began worshipping on that day in order to attract Mithraites to attend their services.

Because “Lord Mithra” was worshiped on Sunday, **by the third century, his worshipers were calling Sunday “the Lord’s Day.”**

Christians, to excuse their own adoption of Sunday worship services, gave the flimsy excuse that John in Revelation 1:10 was referring to Sunday, even though it was obvious that this verse said nothing about that day.

**By the third century, Mithraism had become the primary religion of the heathen in the Roman empire.** Emperor Aurelian (A.D. 270-275), whose mother was a priestess of the Sun, made this solar cult the official religion of the empire. His biographer, Flavius Vopiscus, said that **the priests of the Temple of the Sun at Rome were called pontiffs. They were priests of their dying-rising saviour, Mithra, and were called vicegerents** in religious matters. In order to learn the will of Mithra, the people had to consult his priests.

“Sun worship was one of the oldest components of the Roman religion.”—*Gaston H. Halsberge, The Cult of Sol Invictus, 1972, p. 26.*

#### ENTER CONSTANTINE

**An extremely important series of events occurred when Constantine I became emperor.**

The previous emperor, Diocletian, had appointed four generals to become co-rulers in different parts of the empire. When he retired in A.D. 305, while some co-rulers abdicated, others fought battles to see who would gain control of the empire.

Fighting continued on and off for years, but Constantine became the victor. The crucial battle occurred just north of Rome in October 312, at the Battle of Mulvian Bridge.

**While some of the emperors before him had persecuted the Christians, Constantine shrewdly recognized that desperate measures were needed in order to strengthen the empire against the increasing invasions of heathen tribes from the north. —He decided that combining the leading**

**religions of the empire into one would greatly strengthen the nation.**

By this time, there were only two powerful religions remaining: Mithraism and Christianity. **It is known that Constantine worked closely with Sylvester I, the bishop of the Christian church at Rome, who strongly encouraged him in his objective to combine the two religions into one.**

The year after his victory in 312, by a special edict, **Constantine gave Christianity full legal equality with every other religion in the empire—**something it had never had before. More favors to the church soon followed. **The church had entered the courts of kings, and full apostasy was to follow.**

**Yet Constantine remained a heathen, retaining the pagan title of Pontifex Maximus, which meant that he was the supreme priest of the pagan religion of Mithraism.** Although his mother, Helena, was a Christian, **Constantine continued to favor his father’s god, Mithra.** In his court, he consulted pagan philosophers, as well as Christian ones.

“He continued to use vague monotheistic language that any pagan could accept . . . he restored pagan temples, and ordered the taking of the *auspices* by examining livers of freshly killed animals. He used pagan as well as Christian rites in dedicating Constantinople. He used pagan magic formulas to protect crops and heal disease.”—*Will Durant, Caesar and Christ, p. 656.*

After showing such favor to the Christians, **Constantine issued an order for his soldiers to stand, facing the rising sun, and pray with their eyes closed to Mithra** for several minutes every morning.

In an unreasonable rage, later in life he had his son killed, because he feared the young man might become a rival. Constantine was definitely not a Christian.

**Yet, in spite of this mixing of Christianity and paganism in the mind of Constantine,—he became the most influential determinant of Christianity for more than a thousand years!**

#### THE SUNDAY LAW

**Constantine’s most powerful “contributions” to Christianity was his Sunday Law,** which placed the Roman bishop in a position of leadership over the other Christian churches.

“Unquestionably the first law, either ecclesiastical or civil, by which the Sabbatical observance of that day is known to have been ordained, is the edict of Constantine, A.D. 321.”—*Chamber’s Encyclopedia, article, “Sabbath.”*

**Pope Sylvester (314-337) and his counselor, Eusebius, recognized that the key to control by**

**the Roman pastor, over all the other churches of the Empire, depended on requiring Sunday worship.** This would solidify the pagan innovations which the Roman church had been trying to establish everywhere for decades.

It was by their direct request that Constantine enacted his Sunday laws. He was very willing to do this; for **Constantine saw in it a way to unify the Empire under a single religion**, believing that religious unity would help the Empire resist the increasing attacks from the barbarian hordes in the north. The wording of the law was carefully selected, so that both Mithraists and Christians could accept it and come together.

Sylvester heartily cooperated with him in bringing the Mithraists into the Christian churches.

**"Sylvester . . . decreed that the rest of the Sabbath should be transferred rather to the Lord's day,** in order that on that day we should rest from worldly works."—*Rabanus Maurus, De Clericorum Institutione (Concerning the Instruction of the Clergymen), Book 2, Chapter 46.*

**Here is the first Sunday law in history, a legal enactment by Constantine I** (reigned 306-337):

**"On the Venerable Day of the Sun** ["Venerable die Solis"—the sacred day of the Sun] let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits; because it often happens that another day is not so suitable for grain-sowing or for vine-planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost—given the 7th day of March [A.D. 321], Crispus and Constantine being consuls each of them for the second time."—*The First Sunday Law of Constantine I, in "Codex Justinianus," lib. 3, tit. 12,3; trans. in Phillip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, Vol. 3, p. 380.*

**In this decree, Constantine was careful to use wording which would be acceptable to both Christians and Mithraists.** (In one of his later five Sunday laws, Constantine required that farmers keep Sunday sacred also.)

**"The retention of the old pagan name 'Dies Solis' [Day of the Sun], or 'Sunday,' for the weekly Christian festival, is, in great measure, owing to the union of pagan and Christian sentiment with which the first day of the week was recommended by Constantine to his subjects,** pagan and Christian alike, as the 'venerable day of the sun' . . . **It was his mode of harmonizing the discordant religions of the empire under one common institution.**"—*Arthur P. Stanley, Lectures on the History of the Eastern Church, p. 184.*

**"Constantine labored at this time untiringly to unite the worshipers of the old and the new into one religion.** All his laws and contrivances

are aimed at promoting this amalgamation to melt together a purified heathenism and a moderated Christianity . . . **Of all his blending and melting together of Christianity and heathenism, none is more easy to see through than this making of his Sunday law:** The Christians worshiped their Christ, the heathen their sun-god [so they should now be combined]."—*H.G. Heggveit, Illustreret Kirkehistorie (Illustrated History of the Church), 1895, p. 202.*

**This first of Constantine's six Sunday laws was extremely important in church history!**

**"This [Constantine's Sunday decree of March 321] is the 'parent' Sunday law** making it a day of rest and release from labor. For from that time to the present there have been decrees about the observance of Sunday which have profoundly influenced European and American society. **When the Church became a part of State under the Christian emperors, Sunday observance was enforced by civil statutes, and later when the Empire was past, the Church in the hands of the papacy enforced it by ecclesiastical and also by civil enactments.**"—*Walter W. Hyde, Paganism to Christianity in the Roman Empire, 1946, p. 261.*

"Constantine's decree marked the beginning of a long, though intermittent, series of imperial decrees in support of Sunday rest."—*Vincent J. Kelly, Forbidden Sunday and Feast-Day Occupations, 1943, p. 29.*

#### THE FIRST CHRISTIAN SUNDAY LAW

**Here is the first Sunday Law decree of a Christian council.** (Some historians place it in A.D. 337, while others place it in 364.)

**"Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday [in the original: 'sabbato'—shall not be idle on the Sabbath], but shall work on that day; but the Lord's day they shall especially honour,** and as being Christians, shall, if possible, do no work on that day. If, however, they are found Judaizing, they shall be shut out ['anathema,' excommunicated] from Christ."—*Council of Laodicea, c. A.D. 337, Canon 29, quoted in C.J. Hefele, A History of the Councils of the Church, Vol. 2, p. 316.*

"The keeping of the Sunday rest arose from the custom of the people and the constitution of the [Catholic] Church . . . Tertullian was probably the first to refer to a cessation of affairs on the Sun day; **the Council of Laodicea issued the first conciliar legislation for that day;** Constantine I issued the first civil legislation."—*Priest Vincent J. Kelly, Forbidden Sunday and Feast-Day Occupations, p. 203 [a thesis presented to the Catholic University of America].*

**Here is exactly how the Catholic Council of Laodicea enacted this first church-wide legislation forbidding the keeping of the Bible Sabbath.**

"'Index Canonum,' containing in Greek and

English all the 'canon laws' adopted at the church councils up to A.D. 364, and a 'Digest,' by John Fulton, show that at the *Council of Laodicea* (A.D. 364), the bishops still arranged for meetings on the Sabbath. 'Canon XVI' says: 'The Gospels are to be read on the Sabbath day, with the other Scriptures.'

**"But toward the close of the council, the Sabbath was stigmatized and forbidden in Canon XXIX. This was the first ecclesiastical law against the Sabbath.** Constantine's civil law had preceded this church law by some forty-three years . . . Even after this council, many Christians paid very little attention to its decree for several hundred years."—*John Ley, Sunday a Sabbath, p. 163.*

As the end of the above statement indicates, it is known that **most Christians (especially those living in rural areas and smaller towns) continued to keep the Bible Sabbath for a lengthy period of time** after the Council of Laodicea ended. **It was only by the enactment of even more severe civil and church decrees, and intense persecution, that everyone, except those who had fled to the most distant regions, were eventually forced to abandon the observance of the Bible Sabbath, and attend mass on Sunday.**

Here is a statement from a Catholic catechism:

"Qn: Which is the Sabbath day?

"Ans: Saturday is the Sabbath day.

"Qn: Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

"Ans: **We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church in the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 337) transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.**"—*Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine, p. 50. [Received the apostolic blessing of Pope Pius X, January 25, 1910.]*

#### **MOST CHRISTIANS CONTINUED KEEPING THE BIBLE SABBATH**

We earlier quoted John Ley's statement:

"Even after this council, many Christians paid very little attention to its decree for several hundred years."—*John Ley, Sunday a Sabbath, p. 163.*

**It is a remarkable fact that the great majority of local churches, most in smaller cities, towns, and rural areas, continued keeping the Bible Sabbath—for a full century after Constantine's Sunday Law of A.D. 321.**

"As we have already noted, excepting for the Roman and Alexandrian Christians, **the majority of Christians were observing the seventh-day Sabbath at least as late as the middle of the fifth century [A.D. 450].**

**"The Roman and Alexandrian Christians were among the first of those converted from heathenism.** They began observing Sunday as a merry religious festival in honor of the Lord's resurrection, about the latter half of the second century A.D.

However, they did not try to teach that the Lord or His apostles commanded it. In fact, **no ecclesiastical writer before Eusebius of Caesarea in the fourth century even suggested that either Christ or His apostles instituted the observance of the first day of the week.**

**"These Gentile Christians of Rome and Alexandria began calling the first day of the week 'the Lord's day.'** This was not difficult for the pagans of the Roman Empire who were steeped in sun worship to accept, because they [the pagans themselves] referred to their sun-god as their 'Lord.' "—*E.M. Chalmers, How Sunday Came into the Christian Church, p. 3.*

**The following statement was made 100 years after Constantine's Sunday Law was passed:**

**"Although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the Sabbath every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this."**—*Socrates Scholasticus, quoted in Ecclesiastical History, Book 5, Chapter 22 [written shortly after A.D. 439].*

**"The people of Constantinople, and almost everywhere, assemble together on the Sabbath, . . . which custom is never observed at Rome or at Alexandria."**—*Hermias Sozomen, quoted in Ecclesiastical History, vii, 19, in A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series, Vol. 2, p. 390 [written soon after A.D. 415].*

**"Down even to the fifth century the observance of the Jewish Sabbath was continued in the Christian church, but with a rigor and solemnity gradually diminishing until it was wholly discontinued."**—*Lyman Coleman, Works, Chap. 26, Sec. 2, p. 527.*

**"The ancient Sabbath did remain and was observed . . . by the Christians of the Eastern Church [in the area near Palestine and Asia Minor] above three hundred years after our Saviour's death."**—*A Learned Treatise of the Sabbath, p. 77.*

**There were two reasons for this: First, many faithful Christians refused to abandon the Sabbath plainly taught in the Bible. Second, for a full hundred years after the time of Constantine, there was relatively little persecution of Sabbathkeepers.**

Those who determined to honor the memorial of Creation, rather than the memorial to the pagan Sun god, showed that they regarded God's Word, the Bible, above man's words, as given in church and government decrees.

#### **PERSECUTION INTENSIFIES**

**An increasing number of civil laws and church council decrees kept tightening Sunday enforcement and the persecution of Sabbathkeepers.**

"Constantine's [six Sunday Law] decrees marked

the beginning of a long though intermittent series of imperial decrees in support of Sunday rest.”—*A History of the Councils of the Church*, Vol. 2, p. 316.

“What began, however, as a pagan ordinance, ended as a Christian regulation; and **a long series of imperial decrees, during the fourth, fifth, and sixth, centuries, enjoined [commanded] with increasing stringency abstinence from labor on Sunday.**”—*Hutton Webster, Rest Days*, pp. 122-123, 270.

### HISTORIANS SPEAK

**Historians testify to the fact that the Catholic Church has claimed full responsibility for what it has done:**

“The [Catholic] Church took the pagan buckler of faith against the heathen. **She took the pagan Roman Pantheon** [the Roman], temple to all the gods, and made it sacred to all the martyrs; so it stands to this day. **She took the pagan Sunday** and made it the Christian Sunday . . . The Sun was a foremost god with heathendom. Balder the beautiful: the White God, the old Scandinavians called him. The sun has worshipers at this very hour in Persia and other lands . . . **Hence the Church would seem to have said, ‘Keep that old pagan name. It shall remain consecrated, sanctified.’** And thus the pagan Sunday, dedicated to Balder, became the Christian Sunday, sacred to Jesus. The sun is a fitting emblem of Jesus. The Fathers often compared Jesus to the sun; as they compared Mary to the moon.”—*William L. Gildea, “Paschale Gaudium,” in The Catholic World*, p. 58, March 1894.

“**Like two sacred rivers flowing from paradise, the Bible and divine Tradition** [the decrees of popes and councils] **contain the Word of God**, the precious gems of revealed truth. Though these two divine streams are in themselves, on account of their divine origin, of equal sacredness, and are both full of revealed truths, still, **of the two, Tradition is to us more clear and safe.**”—*Joseph Di Bruno, Catholic Belief*, p. 33.

Still more historians agree:

“**Is it not strange that Sunday is almost universally observed when the Sacred Writings do not endorse it?** Satan, the great counterfeiter, worked through the ‘mystery of iniquity’ to introduce a counterfeit Sabbath to take the place of the true Sabbath. Sunday stands side by side with Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Holy [or Maundy] Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Whitsunday, Corpus Christi, Assumption Day, All Souls’ Day, Christmas Day, and a host of other ecclesiastical feast days too numerous to mention. **This array of Roman Catholic feasts and fast days are all man-made.** None of them bears the divine credentials of the Author of the Inspired Word.”—*M.E. Walsh*.

“**Remains of the struggle** [between the religion of Christianity and the religion of Mithraism] **are found in two institutions adopted from its rival**

**by Christianity in the fourth century, the two Mithraic sacred days: December 25, ‘dies natalis solis’** [birthday of the sun], **as the birthday of Jesus,—and Sunday, ‘the venerable day of the Sun,’ as Constantine called it in his edict of 321.**”—*Walter Woodburn Hyde, Paganism to Christianity in the Roman Empire*, p. 60.

“‘Babylon, the mother of harlots,’ derived much of her teaching from pagan Rome and thence from Babylon. **Sun worship—that led her to Sunday-keeping,—was one of those choice bits of paganism that sprang originally from the heathen lore of ancient Babylon.** The solar theology of the ‘Chaldeans’ had a decisive effect upon the final development of Semitic paganism . . . [It led to their] seeing the sun the directing power of the cosmic system. **All the Baals were thence forward turned into suns;** the sun itself being the mover of the other stars—like it eternal and ‘unconquerable’ . . . Such was the final form reached by the religion of the pagan Semites, and following them, by that of the Romans . . . when they raised ‘*Sol Invictus*’ [the Invincible Sun] to the rank of supreme divinity in the empire.”—*Franz F.V.M. Cummont, Astrology and Religion Among the Greeks and Romans*, p. 55.

“**When Christianity conquered Rome, the ecclesiastical structure of the pagan church, the title and the vestments of the ‘Pontifex Maximus,’ the worship to the ‘Great Mother’ goddess and a multitude of comforting divinities, . . . the joy or solemnity of old festivals, and the pageantry of immemorial ceremony, passed like material blood into the new religion,—and captive Rome conquered her conqueror. The reins and skills of government were handed down by a dying empire to a virile papacy.**”—*Will Durant, Caesar and Christ*, p. 672.

“Modern Christians who talk of keeping Sunday as a ‘holy’ day, as in the still extant ‘Blue Laws’ of colonial America, should know that **as a ‘holy’ day of rest and cessation from labor and amusements Sunday was unknown to Jesus** . . . It formed no tenet [teaching] of the primitive Church and became ‘sacred’ only in the course of time. Outside the church **its observance was legalized for the Roman Empire through a series of decrees starting with the famous one of Constantine in 321,** an edict due to his political and social ideas.”—*W.W. Hyde, Paganism to Christianity in the Roman Empire*, 1946, p. 257.

Here is a statement by a leading Anglican churchman, who was also a historian:

“**The early Christian church adopted, as far as possible, the sacred days of the older cults, and grafted on to them Christian commemorations.**”—*Wilberforce, Archdeacon of Westminster, in Sunday Circle*, London, February 1, 1908.

### PAPAL POWER KEPT STRENGTHENING

**As they gained more and more power, the**

**popes became extremely intolerant of Sabbath-keepers.** Here is a statement by the pope who influenced Constantine to pass his Sunday laws:

"If every Sunday is to be observed by Christians on account of the resurrection, then **every Sabbath on account of the burial is to be regarded in execration [cursing] of the Jews.**"—*Pope Sylvester, quoted by S.R.E. Humbert, "Adversus Graecorum Calumnias," in J.P. Migne, Patrologie, p. 143. Sylvester (A.D. 314-337) was the pope at the time Constantine I was Emperor.*

Eusebius of Caesarea was Sylvester's counselor and a religious adviser to Constantine. In this statement, he admits that **the change from Sabbath to Sunday originated with the church at Rome.**

"All things whatsoever that were prescribed for the [Bible] Sabbath, **we have transferred them to the Lord's day**, as being more authoritative and more highly regarded and first in rank, and more honorable than the Jewish Sabbath."—*Bishop Eusebius, quoted in J.P. Migne, "Patrologie," pp. 1169-1172.*

"The power of the Ceasars lived again in the universal dominion of the popes."—*H.G. Guinness, Romanism and the Reformation.*

**Thus came about the fulfillment of the prophecy of Daniel 7:25 that the little horn "shall think to change times and laws." It had changed God's "time" and His "law."**

No more effective blow could be struck at God's power and authority than to tear the Sabbath seal from the Decalogue and substitute in its place a man-made institution, which has no Biblical basis for holiness.

#### **A STEADY INFLOW OF PAGANISM**

**In addition to the introduction of Sunday worship, the papacy gradually brought in other rites and ceremonies from paganism. Here are a few of them:**

Because pagan priests cut **a circular bald spot, which they called the tonsure, on top of their heads in honor of the solar disc**, Christian leaders at Rome soon required that their priests do it also.

From India, was adopted **ascetics, monastic hermits, and rosary beads**. The **burning of candles** came from Mithraic worship, which considered each light a small "sun."

The **worship of the mother and child** came from Egypt, where statues of the goddess Isis, "the Queen of Heaven," holding her infant son, Horus, were marched in parades and then placed in temples for the people to bow before and venerate. Isis was called "the Mother of God." As the worship of statues of Mary, holding the infant Christ, were set up in churches, still more pagan worshipers entered the church, and enriched it with their wealth.

As mentioned earlier, **December 25 was the great yearly celebration of the birth of Mithra, and Easter was the spring festival in honor of Isis** and many other pagan goddesses. "Fertility rites," consisting of very vile practices were openly celebrated by the multitudes.

**Other things gradually adopted from paganism included:** prayers for the dead; making the sign of the cross; veneration of angels and dead saints; use of images, purgatory, kissing the pope's foot, worship of the cross, and relics, holy water, baptism of bells, canonization of dead saints, celibacy of priests, rosary praying, inquisition, indulgences, transubstantiation (bringing God down into a cup and wafer) auricular confession of sins to the priest instead of to God, Bibles forbidden, and purgatory.

"There is scarcely anything which strikes the mind of the careful student of ancient ecclesiastical history with greater surprise than **the comparatively early period at which many of the corruptions of Christianity, which are embodied in the Roman system, took their rise**; yet it is not to be supposed that when the first originators of many of these unscriptural notions and practices planted those germs of corruption, they anticipated or even imagined they would ever grow into such a vast and hideous system of superstition and error as is that of popery."—*John Dowling, History of Romanism, 13th Edition, p. 65.*

#### **PERSECUTION OF SABBATHKEEPERS INTENSIFIED**

**Gradually, with the passing of time, additional decrees were passed restricting what could be done on Sunday, and forbidding rest and religious meetings on the Bible Sabbath.**

*Church council decrees* were enacted in A.D. 364, 538, 578, 581, 690, and onward.

At the urging of the pope, *governmental decrees* were enacted in A.D. 321, 365, 386, 389, 458, 460, 554, 589, 681, 768, and afterward.

**Each law became stricter; every penalty more severe.** Satan was determined to destroy the Sabbath, for it represented part of God's will for mankind.

**In every case, we find human laws suppressing the day which God has expressly commanded, and in its place exalting a day for which God has made no provision** whatever at any time; namely, the day of the sun.

**Surely, here we have an identifying mark**, an evidence of the determination of men to defy the will of the God of heaven, and to establish their own traditions in place of the things which God has commanded. "It is the mark of a man."

"About 590, Pope Gregory, in a letter to the Roman people, **denounced as the prophets of An-**

tichrist those who maintained that work ought not to be done on the seventh day.”—James T. Ringgold, *The Law of Sunday*, p. 267.

In the later centuries, persecution against believers in the Bible Sabbath intensified until very few were left alive. When the Reformation began, the true Sabbath was almost unknown.

#### THEY WERE WILLING TO DIE RATHER THAN ABANDON THE SABBATH

**You are reading the story of people who loved God and who lost something—something they loved.** Rather, it was taken from them—the precious Sabbath they valued, and needed. And they either had to flee into the wilderness, or watch as the years passed and their little children grew up—never having it, because they were all forced, on the pain of death, to keep Sunday holy.

**But there were others who resisted this apostasy against Bible truth. And they paid the highest price for it.**

**Still others just fled and tried to go into hiding in distant places,** taking with them their beloved families, and the Bible truths that meant so much to them. The book of Revelation mentions them.

“And they overcame him [the devil] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”—*Revelation 12:11; read the entire chapter.*

**For us today, there is help only in one line: We must determine that we will study the Bible and, by the grace of Christ, we will obey it.**

**They were willing to die back then for what the Bible said. Are you and I willing today to do the same?**

To live better is to live Biblically. Take your stand for God’s holy Sabbath, do not waver, and others may follow your example.

#### THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

By the time of Martin Luther and the great sixteenth-century Reformation, only some living in isolated places still kept the Bible Sabbath.

But a major event occurred in 1562. The *Council of Trent* (1545-1563) had convened in order to classify Roman Catholic beliefs. Surprisingly, this had never been done before. But now, in desperation to find ways to oppose the Protestant reformation, **leading Catholic churchmen met to sort through all the practices adopted from paganism over the centuries, and try to find a logical reason why these rites and ceremonies were infallible and approved by God.** The problem was that these things were not in the Bible, which is what the Protestants were now preaching from.

“From a doctrinal and disciplinary point of view,

the Council of Trent was the most important council in the history of the Roman Church, fixing her distinctive faith and practice in relation to the Protestant Evangelical churches.”—*Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, art. “Council of Trent.”

**“Tradition” was the name for all of the multitude of non-Biblical teachings and practices, adopted over the centuries from heathen religions. But what reason could be given for placing tradition above the Bible?**

Day after day went by, and these leaders were utterly at a loss for an answer. **Then, on January 18, 1562, the foundation of Roman Catholic authority was finally laid!** Many historians consider this to be one of the three most important events in Catholic history.

**When, on this date, Gaspar del Fosso, Archbishop of Reggio, stood up and spoke. —He decided once and for all the entire future course of Catholicism.**

Rising to his feet and calling for attention, del Fosso wholeheartedly praised Tradition; and then he made bitter gibes at those who wanted to downgrade its supremacy in the Church.

Since others had already spoken in defense of Tradition, **what was it that made del Fosso’s speech so decisive?** It was this:

**First, he reasoned that the Church of Rome was founded on Tradition; and the Church and its beliefs would soon perish without it.**

Then he gave his punch line: **He told the assembled delegates that the great proof that the doctrine of “Tradition-above-Scripture” must be right was the fact that, centuries earlier—and quite apart from any Scriptural command,—the Church had changed the seventh-day Sabbath, which God Himself had commanded, to Sunday, the first day of the week!**

Del Fosso declared that this proved Tradition to be more important than the Bible—*for Church Tradition had presumed to change the very law of God itself*—and had apparently succeeded! **And what is more, del Fosso climaxed—the Protestants were obeying Rome by also keeping Sunday! They were obeying Catholic Tradition, which totally proved Tradition to be superior.**

That morning, del Fosso made it clear that **Sunday sacredness was the pivotal proof of the entire doctrinal structure of Catholicism.**

**He said that Sundaykeeping was the mark of Catholic authority over all the churches and over all the world!**

His speech settled the matter. The tone of the gathering changed. Never again, in the councils of Rome, would a question be raised in regard to the

supreme authority of papal Tradition. **The fact that Rome had changed God's Sabbath to the papal Sunday, and Protestants carefully obeyed the papacy in this matter, was the "proof" needed to forever establish Rome's authority.** A Catholic historian explains:

"Finally at the last opening session on the eighteenth of January, 1562, **their last scruple was set aside; the Archbishop of Reggio made a speech in which he openly declared that Tradition stood above Scripture.** The authority of the Church could not therefore be bound to the authority of the Scriptures; **because the Church had changed the Sabbath into Sunday, not by the command of Christ, but by its own authority.** With this, to be sure, the last illusion was destroyed, and it was declared that Tradition does not signify antiquity, but continual inspiration."—*J.H. Holtzman, Canon and Tradition*, p. 263.

(The entire address of Gaspar del Fosso, Archbishop of Reggio, as given in the 17th session of the Council of Trent, January 18, 1562, is in *J.H. Holtzman, Canon and Tradition*, published in Ludwigsburg, Germany, in 1859. The original is in *Mansi Sacrorum Conciliorum*, Vol. 33, Cols. 529-530. Latin. In that speech, del Fosso referred to the Protestant admission, in the Augsburg Confession [1530] that "the observation of the Lord's day" had been appointed by "the Church" only.) *Here is what he said:*

**"The Protestants claim to stand upon the written Word only;** they profess to hold the Scriptures alone as the standard of faith. They justify their revolt by the plea that the Church has apostatized from the written Word and follows tradition. Now the Protestant's claim that they stand upon the written Word alone is not true. **Their profession of holding the Scriptures alone as the standard of faith is false. Proof . . . The written Word explicitly enjoins the observance of the seventh day as the Sabbath. They do not observe the seventh day, but reject it.** If they truly hold the Scriptures alone as the standard, they would be observing the seventh day as it is enjoined in the Scripture throughout. **Yet they not only reject the observance of the Sabbath as enjoined in the written Word, but they have adopted, and do practice, the observance of Sunday, for which they have only the tradition of the (Catholic) Church.** Consequently, the claim of Scripture alone as the standard fails and **the doctrine of . . . 'tradition as essential' is fully established,** the Protestants themselves being Judges."—*J.H. Holtzman, Canon and Tradition*, p. 263.

#### THE MARK OF CATHOLIC AUTHORITY

Because of the decision made at the Council of Trent, Catholic writers are quite proud of the

**fact that they changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and boldly declare it is the MARK of their authority.**

"Of course, the Catholic Church claims that the change was her act; it could not have been otherwise, as none in those days would have dreamed of doing anything in matters spiritual and ecclesiastical and religious without her. **And the act is a MARK of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters.**"—*Cardinal Gibbons, letter dated July 7, 1895.*

**"The observance of Sunday by the Protestants is an homage they pay in spite of themselves to the authority of the Catholic Church."**—*Monsignor Louis Segur, Plain Talk about the Protestantism of Today*, p. 213.

**"Q. How prove you that the church hath power to command feasts and holy days?**

**"A. By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of,** and therefore they fondly contradict themselves by keeping Sunday strictly, and breaking most other feasts commanded by the same church.

**"Q. How prove you that?**

**"A. Because by keeping Sunday, they acknowledge the Church's power** to ordain feasts, and to command them under sin."—*The Douay Catechism*, p. 59.

"Some non-Catholics object to Purgatory because there is no specific mention of it in Scripture. **There is no specific mention of the word Sunday in Scripture either.** The Sabbath is mentioned, but Sabbath is Saturday. Yet the Christians of almost all denominations worship on Sunday, not on Saturday. The Jews observe Saturday. **Nowhere in the Bible is it stated that worship should be changed from Saturday to Sunday.**"—*Martin J. Scott, Things Catholics Are Asked About*, 1927, p. 236 [RC].

"In all their official books of instruction, **Protestants claim that their religion is based on the Bible and the Bible only, and they reject Tradition** as even a part of their rule of faith . . .

"There is no place in the New Testament where it is distinctly stated that Christ changed the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday. **Yet all Protestants, except the Seventh-day Adventists, observe the Sunday . . . Protestants follow Tradition in observing the Sunday.**"—*Our Sunday Visitor*, June 11, 1950.

**"Prove to me from the Bible alone that I am bound to keep Sunday holy. —There is no such law in the Bible! It is a law of the holy Catholic Church alone. The Bible says, 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' THE CATHOLIC CHURCH SAYS, NO. By my divine power, I ABOLISH THE SABBATH DAY and command you to keep holy the first day of the week. And lo! The entire civilized world bows down in reverent obedience to the command of the holy Catholic**

**Church!”**—Priest Thomas Enright, CSSR president of Redemptorist College, Kansas City, Mo., in a lecture at Hartford, Kansas, February 18, 1884, and published in *The American Sentinel R.C. journal*, June 1893, p. 173.

#### **WE MUST REMAIN TRUE TO GOD!**

**It is urgent that you and I remain true to the Creator God who gave us the Bible Sabbath. By the grace of Christ, we must keep His holy, Ten Commandment law.**

God is writing everything in His book. He knows all about the decisions of men. Listen to the words of Scripture:

“This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me. But **in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.**”—*Matthew 15:8-9*.

“**Her priests have violated My law, and have profaned Mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane,** neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean, **and have hid their eyes from My Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.**”—*Ezekiel 22:26*.

“But He answered and said, **Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.**”—*Matthew 15:13*.

“**It is time for Thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void Thy law.** Therefore I love Thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.”—*Psalms 119:126-127*.

**The time is coming when the Judge of all the earth will render His final decisions.** May we cling to Jesus and to His Holy Word, the Bible.

**The people of God in the first several centuries knew that the Bible Sabbath was a memorial to Creation, while the Sun day was a memorial to the Sun god. The one was the Creation Sabbath, and the other one was the idol sabbath. The situation has not changed today.**

#### **MY COMMITMENT**

My precious heavenly Father, how much I need Thee every day! If people in past ages could stray so far from Thy side, how urgent it is that I stay close by Thy side every day! How it must have hurt Thy great heart of love when those men tried to get rid of Thy Sabbath! Please, Father, help me to remain true to it to the end. In Jesus name, Amen.

try to return to obedience to God’s direct command on this matter.

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**COMING NEXT**—It is an astounding fact that leading Catholic and Protestant churchmen and writers openly admit that there is no Biblical authority for the attempted change of the Sabbath to Sunday. A number of their statements reveal that they do admit the fact, but they seem quite content to not

Complete Evangelistic Sermon: Chapter Twenty-Seven

# Church Authorities Speak Up

Important Catholics and Protestants

**It was in the early part of the 20th century. Workmen were digging in the basement of an ancient building in Jerusalem.** This building, which runs alongside the *Via Dolorosa*, said to be the street on which Jesus walked on His way to Calvary, had been built above and around the arch that once rang with the words of Pilate: "*Behold the Man!*"

Over the centuries, since the time of Christ, the surface level had gradually risen higher as new buildings were erected on top of the ruins of older ones.

**The workmen were working in a subbasement,—when all at once they came upon the original pavement of the *Lithostrotos*.** When the building was strengthened so nothing would collapse, and the floor was cleared,—there were the stones, *the very stones* upon which our Saviour stood as He was condemned by Pilate.

**Jesus endured the agonizing torture of this entire experience, from Gethsemane, through the court trials, and the agonizing torture of the cross; all this so He could vindicate His Father's moral law and make it possible for you and me to be forgiven and obey that law—so we can become like Him.**

How very thankful we can be for the love of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ His Son!

**Yet in later centuries, professed Christians dared to change God's moral code,** and require men and women to keep their man-made rites and ceremonies, adopted from paganism, on pain of death.

**In this chapter, we will discover that, without hesitation, both Catholic and Protestant authorities clearly state that the attempted change of the Bible Sabbath to Sunday was actually made.**

Frankly admitting that the Bible recognizes only one Sabbath, they claim that the church had the right and the power to change God's true Sabbath to another day of the week. —**The church organization which did the changing even claims that this act is the mark of its power and authority in religious matters.**

## ROMAN CATHOLIC STATEMENTS

Cardinal Gibbons (1834-1921), who was (until

his death) considered the highest Catholic authority in America, said this:

"The Catholic Church by its own infallible authority created Sunday a holy day to take the place of the Sabbath of the old law."—*Kansas City Catholic*, February 9, 1893.

"Now the [Catholic] Church . . . instituted, by God's authority, Sunday as the day of worship. The same Church, by the same divine authority, taught the doctrine of Purgatory . . . **We have, therefore, the same authority for Purgatory as we have for Sunday.**"—*Martin J. Scott, Things Catholics Are Asked About*, 1927, p. 236.

**"Sunday is a Catholic institution, and its claim to observance can be defended only on Catholic principles . . .** From beginning to end of Scripture there is not a single passage that warrants the transfer of weekly public worship from the last day of the week to the first."—*Catholic Press, Sydney, Australia*, August 1900.

**"Protestantism, in discarding the authority of the [Roman Catholic] Church, has no good reason for its Sunday theory,** and ought logically to keep Saturday as the Sabbath."—*John Gilmary Shea, in the American Catholic Quarterly Review*, January 1883.

**"They [Protestants] deem it their duty to keep the Sunday holy. Why?—Because the Catholic Church tells them to do so.** They have no other reason."—*The Ecclesiastical Review [RC]*, February 1914, Vol. 50, No. 2, p. 236.

"It is well to remind the Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and all other Christians that the Bible does not support them anywhere in their observance of Sunday. **Sunday is an institution of the Roman Catholic Church, and those who observe the day observe a commandment of the Catholic Church.**"—*Priest Brady, in an address, reported in the Elizabeth, N.J. News of March 18, 1903.*

**"Ques.—Have you any other way of proving that the [Catholic] Church has power to institute festivals of precept [to command holy days]?"**

**"Ans.—Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her:** She could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority."—*Stephen Keenan, Doctrinal Catechism*, p. 176.

"Reason and common sense demand the acceptance of one or the other of these two alternatives: **either Protestantism and the keeping holy of Saturday or Catholicity and the keeping holy of Sunday.** Compromise is impossible."—*The Catholic Mirror*, December 23, 1893.

"God simply gave His [Catholic] Church the power to set aside whatever day or days she would deem suitable as Holy Days. **The Church chose Sunday, the first day of the week,** and in the course

of time added other days, as holy days.”—*Vincent J. Kelly, Forbidden Sunday and Feast-Day Occupations*, p. 2.

“Protestants . . . accept Sunday rather than Saturday as the day for public worship after the Catholic Church made the change . . . But the Protestant mind does not seem to realize that **in accepting the Bible, in observing the Sunday, they are accepting the authority of the spokesman for the church, the Pope.**”—*Our Sunday Visitor*, February 5, 1950.

“**We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty.**”—*Pope Leo XIII, in an Encyclical Letter*, dated June 20, 1894.

“**Not the Creator of Universe, in Genesis 2:1-3,—but the Catholic Church** can claim the honor of having granted man a pause to his work every seven days.”—*S.C. Mosna, Storia della Domenica*, 1969, pp. 366-367.

“The Pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, **but he is Jesus Christ**, hidden under veil of flesh.”—*The Catholic National*, July 1895.

“If Protestants would follow the Bible, they should worship God on the Sabbath Day. **In keeping the Sunday they are following a law of the Catholic Church.**”—*Albert Smith, Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, replying for the Cardinal, in a letter dated February 10, 1920.*

“We define that the Holy Apostolic See (the Vatican) and **the Roman Pontiff hold the primacy over the whole world.**”—*A Decree of the Council of Trent, quoted in Philippe Labbe and Gabriel Cossart, “The Most Holy Councils,” Col. 1167.*

“It was the Catholic Church which, by the authority of Jesus Christ, has transferred this rest [from the Bible Sabbath] to the Sunday . . . Thus **the observance of Sunday by the Protestants is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the [Catholic] Church.**”—*Monsignor Louis Segur, Plain Talk about the Protestantism of Today*, p. 213.

“We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because **the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.**”—*Peter Geiermann, CSSR, A Doctrinal Catechism*, 1957 edition, p. 50.

“We Catholics, then, have precisely the same authority for keeping Sunday holy instead of Saturday as we have for every other article of our creed, namely, the authority of the Church . . . **whereas you who are Protestants have really no authority for it whatever; for there is no authority for it [Sunday sacredness] in the Bible**, and you will not allow that there can be authority for it anywhere else.”—*The Brotherhood of St. Paul, “The Clifton tracts,” Volume 4, tract 4, p. 15.*

“**The Church changed the observance of the Sabbath to Sunday** by right of the divine, infallible authority given to her by her founder, Jesus Christ. The Protestant, claiming the Bible to be the only guide of faith, has no warrant for observing Sunday.

In this matter the Seventh-day Adventist is the only consistent Protestant.”—*The Catholic Universe Bulletin*, August 14, 1942, p. 4.

“**Of course, the Catholic Church claims that the change was her act;** it could not have been otherwise, as none in those days would have dreamed of doing anything in matters spiritual and ecclesiastical and religious without her. **And the act is a MARK of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters.**”—*Cardinal Gibbons, letter dated July 7, 1895.*

## PROTESTANT STATEMENTS

The Bible is your only safe guide. Jesus can help you obey it. Trust God’s Word more than man’s traditions. **Here are a few of many statements by Protestant leaders agreeing that Sunday is not in the Bible:**

**BAPTIST:** “There was and is a command to keep holy the Sabbath day, but that Sabbath day was not Sunday. It will however be readily said, and with some show of triumph, that the Sabbath was transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week, with all its duties, privileges and sanctions. Earnestly desiring information on this subject, which I have studied for many years, I ask, **where can the record of such a transaction be found? Not in the New Testament—absolutely not.** There is no Scriptural evidence of the change of the Sabbath institution from the seventh to the first day of the week.”—*Dr. E.T. Hiscox, author of the Baptist Manual.*

**CONGREGATIONALIST:** “It is quite clear that however rigidly or devotedly we may spend Sunday, **we are not keeping the Sabbath . . . The Sabbath was founded on a specific divine command. We can plead no such command for the observance of Sunday . . .** There is not a single line in the New Testament to suggest that we incur any penalty by violating the supposed sanctity of Sunday.”—*Dr. R.W. Dale, The Ten Commandments*, pp. 106-107.

**PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL:** “The day is now changed from the seventh to the first day . . . but as **we meet with no Scriptural direction for the change**, we may conclude it was done by the authority of the church.”—*The Protestant Episcopal Explanation of the Catechism.*

**BAPTIST:** “**The Scriptures nowhere call the first day of the week the Sabbath . . . There is no Scriptural authority for so doing**, nor of course, any Scriptural obligation.”—*The Watchman.*

**PRESBYTERIAN:** “**There is no word, no hint in the New Testament about abstaining from work on Sunday.** The observance of Ash Wednesday, or Lent, stands exactly on the same footing as the observance of Sunday. **Into the rest of Sunday no Divine Law enters.**”—*Canon Eyton, Ten Commandments.*

**ANGLICAN:** “And where are we told in the Scrip-

tures that we are to keep the first day at all? **We are commanded to keep the seventh; but we are nowhere commanded to keep the first day.**”—Isaac Williams, *Plain Sermons on the Catechism*, pp. 334, 336.

**METHODIST:** “It is true that there is no positive command for infant baptism. **Nor is there any for keeping holy the first day of the week.** Many believe that Christ changed the Sabbath. But, from His own words, we see that He came for no such purpose. **Those who believe that Jesus changed the Sabbath base it only on a supposition.**”—Amos Binney, *Theological Compendium*, pp. 180-181.

**EPISCOPALIAN:** “We have made the change from the seventh to the first day, from Saturday to Sunday, on the authority of the one holy, catholic, apostolic church of Christ.”—Bishop Seymour, *Why We Keep Sunday*.

**SOUTHERN BAPTIST:** “The sacred name of the seventh day is Sabbath. This fact is too clear to require argument [Exodus 20:10, quoted] . . . On this point the plain teaching of the Word has been admitted in all ages . . . **Not once did the disciples apply the Sabbath law to the first day of the week,**—that folly was left for a later age, nor did they pretend that the first day supplanted the seventh.”—Joseph Judson Taylor, *The Sabbatic Question*, pp. 14-17, 41.

**AMERICAN CONGREGATIONALIST:** “The current notion, that Christ and His apostles authoritatively substituted the first day for the seventh, is absolutely without any authority in the New Testament.”—Dr. Lyman Abbot, *Christian Union*, June 26, 1890.

**CHRISTIAN CHURCH:** “Now there is no testimony in all the oracles of heaven that the Sabbath is changed, or that the Lord’s Day came in the room of it.”—Alexander Campbell, *Reporter*, October 8, 1921.

**DISCIPLES OF CHRIST:** “There is no direct Scriptural authority for designating the first day ‘the Lord’s Day.’”—Dr. D.H. Lucas, *Christian Oracle*, January 23, 1890.

**BAPTIST:** “To me it seems unaccountable that Jesus, during three years’ discussion with His disciples, often conversing upon the Sabbath question, discussing it in some of its various aspects, freeing it from its false [Jewish traditional] glosses, **never alluded to any transference of the day;** also, no such thing was intimated. Nor, so far as we know, did the Spirit, which was given to bring to their remembrance all things whatsoever that He had said unto them, deal with this question. **Nor yet did the inspired apostles,** in preaching the gospel, founding churches, counseling and instructing those founded, discuss or approach the subject.

“Of course I quite well know that Sunday did come into use in early Christian history as a religious day, as we learn from the Christian Fa-

thers and other sources. **But what a pity that it comes branded with the mark of paganism, and christened with the name of the sun god, then adopted and sanctified by the Papal apostasy, and bequeathed as a sacred legacy to Protestantism!**”—Dr. E.T. Hiscox, report of his sermon at the Baptist Ministers’ Convention, *New York Examiner*, November 16, 1893.

**From the cornerstone of the Lutheran faith, the Augsburg Confession, are these words written in 1530. They are no less true today:**

“They [the Catholics] allege the change of the Sabbath into the Lord’s Day, contrary, as it seemeth to the Decalogue; and they have no example more in their mouths than the change of the Sabbath. **They will needs have the Church’s power to be very great, because it hath dispensed with a precept of the Decalogue.**”—*Augsburg Confession*, quoted in Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. 3, p. 64.

#### IN CONCLUSION

**The great question is, What does the Bible say? If the Bible is not a safe guide, then we are all lost. There is no other anchor for the soul.** Upon this old Book, which has weathered the storms of the ages, we must take our stand.

The promise is given that the voice of Jesus will call to the keepers of the gates of Paradise, **“Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in”** (Isaiah 26:2).

God will admit everyone through those gates who is repentant and humble enough to accept Him as their God and their Lord; it matters not whether he be Jew or Gentile, atheist or professed Christian. Whoever is willing to fall at the feet of Jesus and confess his sins, and in Christ’s enabling strength resist temptation and obey God’s moral code of Ten Commandments will receive fulfillment of the promises.

**“The sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of My covenant; even them will I bring to My holy mountain.”—Isaiah 56:6-7.**

**“Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”—Revelation 22:14.**

Turning from the statements of men, let us take our stand on the Word of God:

**“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”—Romans 6:16.**

**“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and**

**Him only shalt thou serve.**—*Matthew 4:10.*

“And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, **How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow Him:** but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.”—*1 Kings 18:21.*

**God is calling us back to obedience to His holy, moral law. Through the enabling grace of Christ, the Ten Commandments must govern our lives.**

“Long should pause the erring hand of man before it dares to chip away with the chisel of human reasonings one single word graven on the enduring tables of the Ten Commandments by the hand of the infinite God. What is proposed? To make an erasure in a heaven-born code; to expunge one article from the recorded will of the Eternal! Is the eternal tablet of His law to be defaced by a creature’s hand? He who proposes such an act should fortify himself by reasons as holy as God and as mighty as His power.”—*George Elliot, The Abiding Sabbath (prize essay), part 2, p. 128, American Tract Society, 1884.*

#### **MY COMMITMENT**

My Father which art in heaven, please help me not to shrink from obedience to Thy law, as is being done by so many others. It is so important that my heart and soul be fully in obedience to Thy will. I dare not have it any other way. In Jesus name, Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—Several questions still remain, and they will be answered next. A specially important one is how we should keep the Bible Sabbath today. This is a very practical question, which you will want to have answered.

# Questions Answered

*The Bible Has the Answers*

After sailing the ship, *Bounty* to Tahiti, Captain Bligh spent a number of months there collecting breadfruit plants, to be transplanted to the British colonies in the Caribbean islands.

**But shortly after the ship weighed anchor and set sail for England, the most famous mutiny in British naval history occurred.**

Captain Bligh, with eighteen of his men, were set adrift,—and the ship sailed back to Tahiti.

Eventually, a few of the mutineers, and some Tahitian women, sailed with Fletcher Christian east to a destination known only by Fletcher—an island that had been discovered and marked on the charts about ten years earlier—and then forgotten.

**Landing at Pitcairn Island, the mutineers hauled everything onto the land and then burned the ship.** They were not discovered for years.

**But, although quickly forgotten, something special was also taken from the ship—a Bible.**

The early days of Pitcairn were a story of drunken revelry and murder. **At last, only one of the mutineers—John Adams—was left.** Surrounded by the children of the fugitives, himself the only link between those young people and a frightful future, Adams felt a solemn responsibility.

**Turning to that Bible, which he found in the bottom of a sea chest, he began reading it,—and then, heartbroken at his former life, dedicated his life to Christ.** As the undisputed leader of the small colony, he now began teaching the children and women from the Bible. Then they built a church and a school.

**Every person on the island became a Christian. Decades later, the Sabbath truth was discovered and everyone became a Sabbathkeeper.**

**Such is the transforming power of the Book of books.** You and I may also experience that power in our lives, as we study it and obey it.

We earlier learned that **the Bible Sabbath originated at the end of Creation Week, when our world was made.** At that time, God established the weekly cycle and set aside the seventh day as a sacred rest day which His obedient people on earth should always keep. He placed this command in the heart of the Ten Commandment law; and, throughout the history of this world, **men and women have repeatedly been tested to see if they will obey His**

**moral law. This includes this special requirement as a test of their loyalty.**

We learned that **this Sabbath was never revoked or changed, that it is the “Lord’s day,” that it was faithfully kept by Jesus and His disciples, and that it will be kept holy in the last days—and even in the New Earth.**

We learned that **the weekly cycle has never changed and the seventh day of each week today is the same Sabbath as in the time of Moses and Christ.**

We learned that the papacy tried to change the Sabbath to Sunday; but we also discovered the startling fact that **the only basis for the Catholic Church’s authority and the primacy of its rites and ceremonies (“Tradition”) as more sacred and requiring more obedience than the Bible is the fact that the command of God which they dared to change—is obeyed by Protestants!** *This means that if all Protestants would keep the Bible Sabbath, the papacy would lose the basis of its church authority!* Its authority to do what it does is based, not on a command of God, but on the permission of men!

*Just now, we want to consider a few other questions which could be asked about the Bible Sabbath.*

## THE TWO COVENANTS

**Question: “If we are living under the new covenant, do we need to keep the Bible Sabbath?”**

A covenant is a contract. When we accept Christ as our Saviour, we enter into a contract, or covenant, with Him. The Bible mentions two covenants; one is called “old,” and the other “new.”

“In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” “For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.”—*Hebrews 8:13, 7.*

**The “old covenant” is the name for a covenant based on the terms and promises stated by the people.** It was flawed because they attempted to obey God in their own strength, and utterly failed.

**The “new covenant,” which was also the original covenant, and is also called the “everlasting covenant,” is based on God’s requirements and promises. Obedience on our part to the Ten Commandments is the basis of this covenant.** God promises eternal life to those who will obey the covenant. They will receive the covenant promises. But, as part of this covenant, Christ provides them with all the grace needed to fulfill their part of the contract.

A special example of the “old covenant” experience occurred when, after hearing the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai and promising to obey God, the people did not do so—but instead made a golden calf shortly afterward.

“Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people.”—*Exodus 19:5*.

“And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.”—*Exodus 19:8*.

**The ten commandments, which was the basis of this contract, is therefore called “the covenant.”**

“And He declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and He wrote them upon two tables of stone.”—*Deuteronomy 4:13*.

Less than 40 days after making this covenant, the people demanded that an idol be made which they could worship. They had abandoned their covenant with God.

“When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, **Up, make us gods**, which shall go before us.”—*Exodus 32:1*.

**The new covenant is different: It is based on God’s abundant promises and man’s continued, willing submission and obedience.**

“He [Christ] is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.”—*Hebrews 8:6*.

**Under the new covenant, God writes His law on our hearts.** That means that we voluntarily submit our lives to obeying His law, through the enabling grace of Christ.

“But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people.”—*Jeremiah 31:33*.

The fault of the old covenant was with the people, not with God. **Here is a nice summary of both covenants:**

“For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. **For finding fault with them.** He saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; **because they continued not in My covenant**, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

**“For this is the covenant that I will make** with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; **I will put My laws into their mind, and write them**

**in their hearts:** and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people.”—*Hebrews 8:7-10*.

## THE END OF THE LAW

**Question: “Paul says that the law has ended, so why should we keep it now?”**

**The moral law identifies sin.** This is the purpose of the law.

“Nay, **I had not known sin, but by the law . . . for by the law is the knowledge of sin.**”—*Romans 7:7; 3:20*.

“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, **I had not known sin, but by the law:** for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”—*Romans 7:7*.

**That truth helps us understand a puzzling verse.** In one passage, **Paul says that Christ is the “end of the law.”**

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”—*Romans 10:4*.

Well, that surely does not agree with dozens, even hundreds of other passages of Scripture! Looking closer, we ask, What does Paul mean when he uses the word, “end”? Checking on this, we discover that **Paul said it correctly, but that the KJV translated it by an old English expression which, in 1611, could mean something quite different** than the way it is commonly used today. The Greek word for “end” is *telos*. **Paul actually said, “For Christ is the goal or aim of the law.”**

**Because the law points out sin, it leads the sinner to Christ who alone can enable him to obey it.** By beholding and accepting Christ, the sinner may become a converted, humble, obedient child of God.

**Here are three other Bible passages where aim or goal is translated “end” in the KJV:**

“Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: **Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.**”—*1 Peter 1:8-9*.

“Now **the end of the commandment is charity** out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.”—*1 Timothy 1:5*.

“Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, **and have seen the end of the Lord;** that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”—*James 5:11*.

**When a minister visited a prison quarry, one of the prisoners told him this: “Parson, do you see these stones? They’re just like the ten commandments; you can keep on breaking ’em, but you can’t get rid of them.”**

**The moral law of God is the simplest of all tests in separating the true from the false: “To**

the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them" (*Isaiah 8:20*). That is why they will be the standard in the Judgment. **Who is that man who dares to judge the law that is the judge of truth, and by which law he himself must be judged?**

#### CHURCH FATHERS AND SUNDAY

**Question: "The early church fathers gave us Sunday. They lived closer to the time of the Apostles than we do, so should we keep Sunday also?"**

It is true that, by the third century after the Bible ended, in Alexandria and Rome the Christians were keeping Sunday, and prior to that, **by A.D. 200, three or four compromising Christian writers (called "early church fathers") wrote letters, containing a mixture of pagan and Christian sentiments, and recommended Sundaykeeping.**

**But we must obey the commands of God, as given in the Bible,** not the commands of professed Christians, whenever they might live.

After the time of the Apostles, there arose such men as Clement of Alexandria, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian who urged the keeping of Sunday by Christians. Shall we build our faith on the writings of such men? **Shall tradition take the place of Holy Scripture?**

**(Tertullian was the first authentic "church father" who advocated Sundaykeeping for Christians.** Here are several other heathen practices which he recommended to the church: offerings for the dead as birthday honors; prohibiting fasting on Sunday, "the Lord's Day"; the keeping of Easter and Whitsunday; and making the sign of the cross continually throughout the day.)

**Here is what knowledgeable historians, who have studied those writings, tell us about these so-called "church fathers"—both early and later:**

**"There are but few of them whose pages are not rife with errors—errors of method, errors of fact, errors of history, of grammar, and even of doctrine. This is the simple truth about them."**—*Archdeacon Farrar, History of Interpretation, pp. 162-163.*

**"When God's Word is by the Fathers expounded, construed, and glossed, then, in my judgment, it is even as when one strains milk through a coal-sack, which must needs spoil and make the milk black.** God's Word of itself is pure, clean, bright and clear; but, through the doctrines, books, and writings of the Fathers, it is darkened, falsified, and spoiled."—*Martin Luther, quoted in The Table-Talk of Martin Luther, Hazlitt translation, p. 281.*

**Tertullian,** who lived west of Alexandria, was one of the few professed Christian writers before A.D. 300 who advocated the keeping of Sunday.

Primarily writing in A.D. 196-220, he **wrote careful instructions for how Christians should keep holy the pagan worship day, Sunday,** instead of the Bible Sabbath. Here is part of his instruction:

"At every forward step and movement, at every going in and out, when we put on our clothes and shoes, when we bathe, when we sit at table, when we light the lamps, on couch, on seat, in all the ordinary actions of daily life, we trace upon the forehead the sign of the cross."—*Collected Writings of Tertullian.*

Such theories are not Biblical!

**Alexandria, Egypt was the center of apostate Christianity in the early centuries, which supplied the bishop of Rome with many of the pagan rites** and ceremonies which he tried to command the other churches to do.

**The other earliest, bold advocate of Sunday-keeping was Clement of Alexandria,** who (from A.D. 190 to 215) was head of the most apostate Christian seminary in existence at that time.

**Clement tried to unite the allegorical errors of Plato's Republic with the pagan worship rites of Mithra and Isis—and teach the resulting heresies to Christians.** His writings were a cesspool of error. Here are two of Clement's most important statements about Sundaykeeping. As you read them, keep in mind that **he was the first, influential, modernizing Christian to urge the keeping of Sunday.** Here is his "proof" that the sacredness of the seventh day has passed to the eighth day, or Sunday.

"And the Lord's day Plato prophetically speaks of in the tenth book of the *Republic*, in these words, 'And when seven days have passed to each of them in the meadow, on the eighth day they are to set out and arrive in four.' "—*Clement, Miscellanies, Book 5, Chapter 14.*

"And the fourth word [in the Ten Commandments] is that which intimates that the world was created by God, and that He gave us the seventh day as a rest . . . The seventh day, therefore, is proclaimed a rest—abstraction from ills—preparing for the primal day, our true rest; which, in truth, is the first creation of light, in which all things are viewed and possessed . . . The eighth may possibly turn out to be properly the seventh, and the seventh a day of work. For the creation of the world was concluded in six days . . . The Pythagoreans, as I think, reckon six the perfect number. As marriage generates from male to female, so six is generated from the odd number three, which is called the masculine number, and the even number two, which is considered feminine. For twice three is six."—*Clement, Miscellanies, Book, Chapter 16.*

Because first day sanctity is totally missing from the Bible, in order to adopt the sacred day of the Sun god into Christianity, **the church fathers in-**

vented every possible theory, declaring that the “eighth day” was superior to the seventh, because it comes after it,—while at the same time they said that the first day is superior to the seventh, because it comes before it—and first in the week. Those men were pagan-loving philosophers, who used words and logic in irrational ways in order to confuse people who thought they were very wise.

**Take God’s divinely inspired book, the Bible, as your guide for life, and, clinging to Christ for help and strength, you will safely travel to your heavenly home.**

“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but **the Word of our God shall stand forever.**”—*Isaiah 40:7-8.*

**“Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven.”**—*Psalms 119:89.*

Countless laws have been enacted by men, but there is only one perfect law—God’s law. The justice of that perfect law was met with God’s own perfect sacrifice—“a Lamb without blemish and without spot.”

“Not silver nor gold hath obtained my redemption, No riches of earth could have saved my poor soul; The blood of the cross is my only foundation, The death of my Saviour now maketh me whole.”—*James McGray.*

#### THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

**Question: “Should we not keep Sunday holy instead of the Bible Sabbath because Christ rose from the dead on the first day?”**

**Neither the first advent of Christ, His death, nor His resurrection in any way affected the great Sabbath rest** that Christ as Creator had set up four thousand years earlier at the close of Creation Week.

**We well agree that the resurrection of Christ was considered worthy of a memorial** that would serve to remind men of that marvelous event. —But the Bible says that the ordinance of baptism was chosen for that purpose! It symbolizes *both* Christ’s death *and* resurrection.

**Genuine baptism (by immersion) is, as Paul explains in Romans 6:1-13, a real burial and resurrection,** and very fittingly represents the burial and resurrection of Christ. But nowhere has Christ or any apostle said that the first day of the week should be kept in commemoration of the resurrection.

Not only is baptism a memorial of both the death and resurrection of Christ; **it is also a symbol of our victory over sin as we accept Christ.** Paul mentions all three here:

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? **Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.** For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, **that henceforth we should not serve sin.**”—*Romans 6:3-6.*

In the above passage, five times baptism is a symbol of death; two times it is a symbol of the resurrection; and two times it symbolizes the clean, obedient life we should live thereafter.

**God does not overthrow one sacred memorial of creation and proceed to set up another on its ruins.** He makes no mistakes, nor does He have to alter His plans. “For I am the Lord, I change not.” *Malachi 3:6.* With Him “is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (*James 1:17*). Jesus Christ is “the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (*Hebrews 13:8*).

*The only important event in the Bible which occurred on the first day—the resurrection of Christ—was seized by the early church fathers, and later by the papacy, as a reason why the Mithraic holy day should be kept by Christians. **Although Christ’s resurrection was a certainty; yet it was His crucifixion which was pivotal in the plan of salvation.***

Significantly, the apostate Christians did not try to change the Sabbath to Friday, in honor of the crucifixion, for that would not have brought huge numbers of Mithraists into the church. They also adopted Easter from the worship of Ishtar, and the Queen of Heaven error from Egypt, in order to bring large numbers of other pagans into the church.

#### HOW JESUS KEPT THE SABBATH

**Question: “Did Jesus always carefully keep the Bible Sabbath?”**

**Jesus was a careful Sabbathkeeper.**

“As His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read.”—*Luke 4:16.*

**We also have examples of Jesus providing for basic needs on the Sabbath.** In Matthew 12:1-12 is recorded the criticism by the Pharisees of Christ and His disciples. They criticized the disciples for snapping off a few heads of wheat as they walked through a field on the Sabbath.

“Behold, Thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day.”—*Matthew 12:2.*

Actually, Jewish law permitted anyone to obtain

food from fields not their own; but, since they were doing this on the Sabbath, the caviling Pharisees complained. **Over the years, they had invented a multitude of senseless rules to hedge in the Sabbath, which made it difficult to keep.**

*Here are a couple examples of their foolish regulations:* A person could not carry a handkerchief on the Sabbath; but, if he pinned it to his clothing, he could. A person could not travel over a mile and a half on the Sabbath. But, if he took food and ate some at the end of that distance, it became his “home;” so he could then journey another mile and a half.

**Such senseless theories were ignored by Christ,** who kept the Sabbath in accordance with Bible principles.

**You will recall that Jesus also cautioned His followers to carefully keep the Sabbath after His death,** and avoid doing any worldly business or major activities on that holy day. Just prior to the predicted destruction of Jerusalem, nearly forty years later, the disciples were to try to avoid having to pack up and flee from the city on the Sabbath day.

**“Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day.”—Matthew 24:20.**

**The Pharisees also criticized Jesus for healing a man on the Sabbath.**

“And the scribes and Pharisees watched Him, whether He would heal on the Sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against Him.”—*Luke 6:7.*

**Jesus met their false ideas of Sabbathkeeping with these words:**

**“Is it lawful on the Sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?”—Luke 6:9.**

Jesus then healed the man (*verse 10*). **Jesus insisted that it was all right to minister to basic and urgent needs of others on the Sabbath.** He also said that He was “Lord even of the Sabbath day” (*Matthew 12:8; Mark 2:28*). As the Creator of the Sabbath (*John 1:3*), the Sabbath was His day. **The Sabbath was made to be a blessing to man.**

“The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.”—*Mark 2:27.*

**Throughout His life, Jesus told His disciples that they should obey the Ten Commandments, and He gave them a perfect example of obeying them Himself.**

“If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love.”—*John 15:10.*

#### WHAT DO I DO NOW?

**Question: “I did not know about the Bible Sabbath until now, what am I to do?”**

**God can forgive our past ignorance; but, when**

**we learn the truth about His Sabbath commandment, He requires that we keep it holy. We will let God speak in His Word:**

**“The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.”—Acts 17:30.**

**“Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you.** God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth.”—*Acts 17:23-24.*

“Turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.”—*Acts 14:15.*

**“Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping His commandments,** and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command thee this day.”—*Deuteronomy 8:11.*

**“Hallow My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you,** that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.”—*Ezekiel 20:20.*

**You and I were once lost in sin, and God leads us out—not merely to be His adopted children, but also to keep His Bible Sabbath.**

“And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day.”—*Deuteronomy 5:15.*

#### HOW TO KEEP THE BIBLE SABBATH

**Question: “I want to begin keeping the true Sabbath, which God gave us. How do I do it?”**

Did you know that **not only has the weekly cycle never been changed,—but it is even part of the functioning of our physical bodies!** It was H.L. Hastings, in his book (*Will the Old Book Stand?*), who drew attention to the fact that some fevers (for instance, typhoid) run seven, fourteen, twenty-one, and twenty-eight days, changing every seventh day, as do some other diseases that, to one degree or another, result from physical exhaustion.

**Many believe that man is built on this seven-day plan and therefore needs a weekly rest day,** just as an eight-day clock needed to be wound up every week. **It seems there is a law of sevens inwrought in our nature,** as well as revealed in the Fourth Commandment. **God designed our bodies so they would need the Sabbath rest which He commanded us to take.**

**But, back to the question: “How should we keep the Sabbath?” Let us consider several of the principles involved in genuine Sabbath-keeping:**

**“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work.**

**“But the seventh day is the Sabbath** of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.

“For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.”—*Exodus 20:8-11*.

**The Fourth Commandment calls our attention to God’s creatorship of the world. On this day, we should try to be out in nature with our families during part of the Sabbath hours.**

**“The Sabbath calls our thoughts to nature, and brings us into communion with the Creator.** In the song of the bird, the sighing of the trees, and the music of the sea, we still may hear His voice who talked with Adam in Eden in the cool of the day. And as we behold His power in nature we find comfort, for the word that created all things is that which speaks life to the soul.”—*Desire of Ages*, 281-282.

**“The value of the Sabbath as a means of education is beyond estimate.** Whatever of ours God claims from us, He returns again, enriched, transfigured, with His own glory . . . The Sabbath and the family were alike instituted in Eden, and in God’s purpose they are indissolubly linked together. **On this day more than on any other, it is possible for us to live the life of Eden . . .**

**“God’s love has set a limit to the demands of toil. Over the Sabbath He places His merciful hand.** In His own day He preserves for the family opportunity for communion with Him, with nature, and with one another. Since the Sabbath is the memorial of creative power, it is the day above all others when we should acquaint ourselves with God through His works. In the minds of the children the very thought of the Sabbath should be bound up with the beauty of natural things.”—*Education*, 250-251.

**We are to keep this special day holy, and in order to do this properly we need to live close to God.**

**“In order to keep the Sabbath holy, men must themselves be holy.** Through faith they must become partakers of the righteousness of Christ. When the command was given to Israel, ‘Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,’ the Lord said also to them, ‘Ye shall be holy men unto Me.’ Ex. 20:8; 22:31.”—*Desire of Ages*, 283.

**The commandment also tells us that we should spend the other six days working at various tasks, for they are not rest days.**

“Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work.”—*Exodus 20:9*.

**Friday is the special day when we are to prepare for the coming Sabbath hours.**

“It was the preparation, that is, the day before

the Sabbath.”—*Mark 15:42*.

“That day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on.”—*Luke 23:54*.

**All through the week, we are to have the Sabbath in mind, but on Friday we are to specially prepare for its holy hours.** (Some do part of this preparation on Thursday, to lighten the Friday load.) **Preparations should be entirely completed before the Sabbath begins;** so we can enter it in a peaceful atmosphere, not hurriedly trying to get last things done.

**All secular work should be laid aside,** and our Sabbath clothes should be laid out. Unnecessary cooking should be avoided on the Sabbath. However, living in colder climates than where the Israelites lived in the desert, warming some food on the Sabbath may be needed.

**We should guard the edges of the Sabbath;** for, due to trees and buildings between our home and the horizon, it may be easy to not know with certainty the exact moment of sunset.

It is best not to overeat on the Sabbath, so our minds will be clear to better appreciate the spiritual blessings we can receive during these holy hours. The meals should be simple but attractive.

**Before the setting of the sun, let the members of the family assemble to read God’s Word, to sing and pray.** At family worships, let the children take a part. Let them bring their Bibles, and each read a verse or two. Then sing a familiar song or two, followed by prayer.

**Let not the precious hours of the Sabbath be wasted in bed.** On Sabbath, it is well for the family to arise early, so there is no confusion and rushing about in preparation to leave for Sabbath School and church.

**The morning church service only occupies a part of the day. The portion remaining to the family may be made the most sacred and precious season of all the Sabbath hours.** Much of this time should be spent by parents with their children. It is not best for parents to attend Sabbath afternoon meetings, while their children run around outside loose.

**If your children come to love the precious hours of the Sabbath, they will want to remain faithful when they are grown.**

In pleasant weather, let the parents walk with their children in the fields and groves. Repeat Bible stories, point out the things of nature which call to mind our Creator. Look for nature nuggets to share with one another, such as beautiful leaves. Tell them again about Jesus and how He lived and died for them; and how He is ministering in the Sanctuary above, so they can be empowered to live humble,

obedient lives in service to Him and to others. Question them as to what they learned in Sabbath School and church.

**Thus parents can make the Sabbath, as it should be, the most joyful, peaceful day of the week. They can lead their children to regard it as a delight, the holy of the Lord.**

Those who do not have children, may use these hours to write missionary letters, visit the sick, give Bible studies, or hand out missionary literature from door to door.

**There are times when an emergency arises, and someone urgently needs our help on the Sabbath.** Helping them and drawing them closer to Jesus is worthwhile during the Sabbath hours. **If a family member is infirm, his basic needs must be cared for during the Sabbath, as they would on other days.** Basic needs must be met.

**When it is necessary to be in the company of unbelievers on the Sabbath, we should keep our minds stayed upon God** and commune with Him. Whenever there is opportunity, we should speak to others in regard to the truths of the Bible.

**We should always be ready to relieve suffering and help those in need. But we should not talk about matters of business or engage in common, worldly conversation.** At all times and in all places God requires us to prove our loyalty to Him by honoring the Sabbath.

**A Sabbathkeeper cannot allow men in his employ, paid by his money, to work on the Sabbath.** If he is in partnership with an unbeliever who is doing this, he must cancel the business relationship.

**God will bless our efforts as we seek to be obedient to His plan, and an example and blessing to others.**

"And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; **and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.**

**"If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words;**

**"Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."**—Isaiah 58:12-14.

**In conclusion, it should be mentioned that we live in a very difficult and evil world.** It is easier to keep the Bible Sabbath when one lives in

the country and everyone in the home is a Sabbath-keeper. But, unfortunately, many have to live in a city and in a home with unbelievers. **Satan will try to do whatever he can to make the life of every Sabbathkeeper difficult, in order to discourage him. But God will provide encouragement and help as you try to do the best you can.**

Please understand that **there is a vast difference between the person who has no respect for the Bible Sabbath, and the one who is trying to keep it holy.** Yes, you may encounter difficulties and discouragements. **But God knows your heart, that you love Him and are determined to be loyal to Him to the end.**

The day is coming when you will inherit a home in the better world, and all of earth's problems will be past.

**As Columbus skirted the shores of the New World, he approached the mouth of the River Orinoco.** It was suggested that they faced an island. But the famed explorer said, "No such river flows from an island. That mighty torrent must drain the waters of a continent."

In a similar manner, **in these studies, we have discovered the glorious truth about the Bible Sabbath. In doing so, we have encountered a massive amount of evidence showing it to be the only Sabbath we are commanded to keep today.**

**Awed by our discovery, we exclaim, "Thank God for revealing this great truth to us! We accept it and make it our own.** We will be loyal, obedient children of God to the end!"

"A wooden cross bore a changeless Christ, On the face of Golgotha's hill, Where He died for my sins against a changeless law, And fulfilled His Father's will."—*Author unknown.*

"I will follow Thee, my Saviour, Wheresoever my lot may be. Where Thou goest I will follow; Yes, my Lord, I'll follow Thee.

"I will follow Thee, my Saviour, Thou didst shed Thy blood for me; And though all men should forsake Thee, By Thy grace I'll follow Thee."—*J. Lawson.*

**Just now, while this is fresh in your mind, is the time to make this decision.** You have wanted to improve your life for a long time, and determining to prove true to Christ will bring you peace of heart.

"Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree? Oh, how this causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble. Were you there when they crucified my Lord?"

The explorer, Nansen, tried with a long measuring line to measure the depth of the ocean in the far North. When he could not, he wrote, "Deeper than that." He did this repeatedly, each time, making the

same note in his journal, “Deeper than that.”

The love of Christ for mankind is deeper far than any measuring line which we can use. It is as measureless as Calvary.

“Through all the depth of sin and loss, Drops the plummet of the cross! Never yet abyss was found, Deeper than that cross could sound.”—*Whittier*.

“Could we with ink the ocean fill, And were the skies of parchment made; Were every stalk on earth a quill, And every man a scribe by trade: To write the love of God above Would drain the ocean dry, Nor could the scroll contain the whole, Though stretched from sky to sky.”—*M.E. Lehman*.

### MY COMMITMENT

Please, Father, give me the strength day by day, to not be ashamed of Thy beautiful Sabbath rest, but to share this truth with others. They need to know this! None can know how soon they might die and their probation forever close. In view of the times in which we live, it is not enough that I obey the Sabbath myself; I must share this truth with others. Help me to do this. In Jesus name, I ask it. Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—The Bible presents us with important information about the work of the Holy Spirit,—and also about the sin against the Holy Spirit. What is the truth about this? We want to know this.

# The Presence of the Holy Spirit

## And the Unpardonable Sin

On one occasion, Charles Spurgeon, the leading British preacher of the nineteenth century, preached a dismally poor sermon. He stammered and floundered all the way through it. **That evening, he pled with God to send the Holy Spirit to help it reach hearts and bring conversions. He continued praying that prayer throughout the week.** On the next weekend, he once again delivered a powerful sermon, but he did not afterward pray that the Holy Spirit would use it to convict souls. "I'll watch the results of those two sermons," he said. **Spurgeon was later able to trace forty-one conversions from the first one, and none from the second. He was convinced anew of the power of the Holy Spirit to use us to the degree that we let Him.**

**How thankful we can be for the Holy Spirit! Shortly before His crucifixion, Christ promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to guide His followers as they studied the Scriptures, tried to minister to the needs of others, and shared the truths of how to become followers of Jesus.**

"If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."—*John 14:15-17*.

### THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**How kind it is of Jesus who, when He was about to go back to heaven,—left the Holy Spirit to help us!** "If I depart," Christ said, "I will send Him unto you" (*John 16:7*). This divine "Comforter" would bring encouragement to the faithful.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."—*John 14:26-27*.

Also called "the Spirit of truth" (*John 15:26*), **the Holy Spirit also convicts sinners that they are doing wrong.** He moves on their hearts to want to live a better life, and warns men of the coming Judgment.

"And when He is come, He will reprove the world

of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."—*John 16:8*.

The Holy Spirit speaks (*1 Timothy 4:1*); teaches (*1 Corinthians 2:3-4*); bears witness (*Romans 8:16*); makes intercession (*Romans 8:26*); distributes gifts (*1 Corinthians 12:11*); and invites the sinner to return to God (*Revelation 22:17*).

**It was the Holy Spirit who moved on the prophets to give their messages.**

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."—*2 Peter 1:21*.

**By helping us better understand the Word of God and how to live better lives, the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ.**

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."—*1 Corinthians 2:9-10*.

The Holy Spirit will strengthen those who cry to God for help in winning souls. Oh, that this may be your experience and mine!

**Back in the old days, there were trolley cars on the streets of many of our cities. They were powered by electricity generated from the powerhouse, which was sent through overhead lines.** The trolley car moved forward when the conductor raised the diagonal connector up to touch the overhead wire, called the trolley. *Years ago, L.G. Broughton wrote this:*

"When we would come to a cross street, I noticed that by a touch of the handle the car would almost stop, and yet would not quite stop, but just go creeping along like a snail. Then all at once the motorman would touch the handle again, the car would go very fast. Unable to understand how, if he touched the overhead wire at all, he did not get full power, I asked him.

"'Why,' he said, 'when I squeeze this handle I open the mouth that grips the trolley. When I want to go slow, I open the mouth that contacts the trolley so it just touches it. We call this "skinning the wire." But when I touch it solidly,—I get all the power in the powerhouse.'

There are thousands of Christians who are just "skinning the wire." **They only want just enough help from God to get through the day. Yet there are those who plead earnestly for the Holy Spirit to use them to help others, that souls may be saved—and they receive power from the powerhouse.** Christ said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations" (*Matthew 28:18-19*). We can have so much more help from the Holy Spirit if we will *really*

dedicate our lives to God's service.

"He [the Holy Spirit] shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you."—*John 16:14-15*.

**We dare not be like many in the world who live in such a way that the Holy Spirit cannot effectively reach their hearts.**

"The Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."—*John 14:17*.

#### THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

**Did you ever try out a new alarm clock** which, on the first morning startled you out of bed? But if you should turn it off and go back to sleep, and repeat the process day after day, you would soon sleep through its warning. The bell does not ring any less loudly. It is your relationship to the bell that has changed. So it is when we continually ignore the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

**We have been given warning not to grieve the Holy Spirit**, who pleads with us to come to Christ and obey His Written Word. We are told, "Quench not the Spirit" (*1 Thessalonians 5:19*). "There is a sin unto death" (*1 John 5:16*). We are told:

"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."—*Ephesians 4:30*.

**Alexander MacLaren describes the process by which the conscience becomes seared and hardened** in words which one cannot forget:

"An old historian says about the Roman armies that marched through a country, burning and destroying every living thing: '*They make it a solitude, and they call it peace.*'"

"And so do men with their consciences. They stifle them, sear them, forcibly silence them, somehow or other; and then, when there is a dread stillness in their hearts, broken by no voice of either approbation or blame, but doleful, like the unnatural quiet of a deserted city,—then they say it is peace!"

**It is urgent, each day, that we wholeheartedly determine that we shall serve God fully.** If we do not, unconsciously we will keep sliding back and ere long Satan will have us in his clutches again.

**When we learn important new Bible truths, which are plainly presented,—we must obey them.** Let our prayer be that of David:

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me."—*Psalms 51:10-11*.

We are told, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (*Genesis 6:3*). We do not want to do

"despite unto the Spirit of grace" (*Hebrews 10:29*). **Our probation in this world is short. None of us can know when we might die. Today, while it is today, we must make decisions that will help us press ever upward,** ever close to God in Christ.

"Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear His voice, Harden not your hearts."—*Hebrews 3:7-8*.

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; while it is said, today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."—*Hebrews 3:12-15*.

**"There is a time, we know not when, A place we know not where, That marks the destiny of men, To glory or despair.**

**"There is a line by us unseen, That crosses every path; The hidden boundary between, God's patience and His wrath.**

"How far may we go on in sin? How long will God forbear? **Where does hope end, and where do the confines of despair begin?**

"An answer from the skies is sent; 'Ye that from God depart, **While it is called today, repent, And harden not your heart.**'"—*J. Addison Alexander*.

**A continual refusal to submit to the promptings of the Holy Spirit to repent—leads to the sin against the Holy Spirit.** Here is a powerful description of the priceless treasure in Christ which we can have—and also lose:

**"When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart.** A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. **The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world,** and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. **A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan.**

**"But unless we do yield ourselves to the control of Christ, we shall be dominated by the wicked one.** We must inevitably be under the control of the one or the other of the two great powers that are contending for the supremacy of the world. It is not necessary for us deliberately to choose the service of the kingdom of darkness in order to come under its dominion. **We have only to neglect to ally ourselves with the kingdom of light.** If we do not co-operate with the heavenly agencies, Satan will take possession of the heart, and will make it his abiding place.

"The only defense against evil is the indwelling of

Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin. We may leave off many bad habits, for the time we may part company with Satan; but **without a vital connection with God, through the surrender of ourselves** to Him moment by moment, we shall be overcome. Without a personal acquaintance with Christ, and a continual communion, we are at the mercy of the enemy, and shall do his bidding in the end.

“The last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so,” said Jesus, ‘shall it be also unto this wicked generation.’ There are none so hardened as those who have slighted the invitation of mercy, and done despite to the Spirit of grace. **The most common manifestation of the sin against the Holy Spirit is in persistently slighting Heaven’s invitation to repent.** Every step in the rejection of Christ is a step toward the rejection of salvation, and toward the sin against the Holy Spirit.”—*Desire of Ages*, 324.

#### MY COMMITMENT

Kind Father, I thank Thee for Thy long patience with me. I thank Thee for not giving up on me! Please save me from myself, my weak, unChristlike self! Fill me with Thy Holy Spirit—to the degree that, day by day, I will earnestly plead with Thee for help in living a godly life and helping those around me to know Thee better.

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**COMING NEXT**—The people of God need special guidance as they near the close of time.

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— PART SEVEN —

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BETTER LIVING IN CHRIST

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A Full-Message Evangelistic Sermon: Chapter Thirty

# The Spirit of Prophecy

A Special Gift in These Last Days

In Revelation, chapter 12, we are told of the frenzied efforts of Satan to destroy God's faithful people after the death of Christ, in the centuries which followed. The chapter concludes with these words:

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."—*Revelation 12:17*.

## THE REMNANT KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS

We are told that the 'dragon' is Satan (*verse 9*), and that he is wroth with the true church, all down through the ages (*verses 6-16*),—and especially with the "remnant" because they "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (*verse 17*).

The Bible is here telling us that the keeping of God's moral law is an identifying trait of the true church in the last days.

It is significant that God calls the commandment keepers, living down at the end of time, "the remnant." This means that, like the end of a bolt of cloth, they are the last part of the faithful of all ages. It also indicates that they will be very small in number.

## THE REMNANT HAVE THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

Revelation 12:17 also says that this final "remnant" will have "the testimony of Jesus Christ." There is another passage in Revelation which explains what this is:

"The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."—*Revelation 19:10*.

Therefore when the Scripture describes the remnant church as having the "testimony of Jesus," it says that it will have in its midst the gift of "the spirit of prophecy," which provides special guidance to God's people to help them weather the terrible crises in the last days.

For centuries, a variety of errors have come

into the churches. God saw that there would be need of special guidance in the last days in order to sort through these—and clearly see which were truths definitely stated in the Bible, and which were errors to be rejected.

In addition, we are also told in Revelation 12 that, with each passing century, Satan has become more and more desperate to deceive and destroy God's faithful, obedient children—before he, himself, is finally destroyed in the lake of fire (*Revelation 20:10, 14-15*).

"Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."—*Revelation 12:12*.

Deceptions of every conceivable kind are all around us, and we surely need special guidance today!

God has provided such special guidance in every major crisis in history: Noah (*Genesis 6:9, 13, 17*); Moses (*Exodus 3:4-5, 11-12; 4:10-16; Deuteronomy 34:10-12*); Elijah (*1 Kings 17:1; 18:20-22, 37-41; 2 Kings 2:11, 13*); John the Baptist (*Mark 1:2-5; Luke 7:28*).

For example, by apostasy and disobedience Israel forfeited the right; yes, indeed, they were shut off from the avenue of the Spirit's guiding voice—and brought on themselves a great crisis when they worshiped Baal, the Sun god. God, in His mercy, sent Elijah. Although called a "prophet," it was his work to guide them back to humble obedience to Bible principles (*1 Kings 17-18*).

We are told that this gift of guidance (called the "the gift of prophecy") will remain in the church until the end of time (*Ephesians 4:7-16*). Paul compares the church to the body, the various parts being parts of the body (*1 Corinthians 12:1-17, 28*). Prophets are the eyes of the church, which is why they are also called "seers" (*1 Samuel 9:9; compare Luke 11:34 and Proverbs 29:18*).

Peter promised that God would provide this special guidance in the last days.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy . . . and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy."—*Acts 2:17-18*.

The warning Christ gave against false prophets proves there are true ones. There is no counterfeit without a genuine (*Matthew 7:15*).

This gift was in the New Testament church. It is one of the gifts for service that Christ bestowed upon the church as He ascended to Heaven.

"Wherefore He saith, when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto

men . . . And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”—*Ephesians 4:8, 11-13*.

**But somehow in the long course of history, amid the “falling away” from the faith, the gift of the spirit of prophecy was lost. It is a gift associated with loyalty to God’s commandments.**

“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”—*Proverbs 29:18*.

**The following Scriptures indicate that God’s law and God’s prophets are always found together. If His people do not obey His law, then they will not have that special guidance:**

“The law is no more; her prophets also find no vision from the Lord.”—*Lamentations 2:9*.

**The true church, just before Jesus returns, will have this special guidance, called “the spirit of prophecy,” because it keeps the commandments of God.**

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”—*Revelation 12:17*.

“The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”—*Revelation 19:10*.

“So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—*1 Corinthians 1:7-8*.

#### RESTORING THE NEW TESTAMENT FAITH

**As predicted in Revelation 12:17, in the latter days the church is to come back to the primitive faith. God’s special message in these last days calls for loyalty to the commandments of God. We are told that God’s last-day remnant church will not only keep the commandments of God, but they will also have that gift of the spirit of prophecy, by which in former times God guided and led and preserved His people.**

The apostles’ commission belongs to the Christian age, and embraced the whole of it. Consequently **the gifts were lost only through apostasy, and will be revived with the revival of primitive faith and practice.**

**This gift, in the last days, is designed not to replace the Bible, but only to clarify and point to its foundational truths,** such as the need for obedience to God’s law through the enabling grace of Jesus Christ—a truth which so many in our world

today do not understand.

**Never was there such confusion and diversity of faith in Christendom as at the present day.** If the gifts were necessary to preserve the unity of the primitive church, how much more so in order to restore unity now! We are assured that the watchmen shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion (*Isaiah 52:8*), and that, in the time of the end, the wise shall understand (*Daniel 12:10*). When this is fulfilled there will be a unity of faith among all that are truly “wise”—for they alone cling to the important truths for these last days.

**Paul had said that “the mystery of iniquity doth already work” in his day (2 Thessalonians 2:7).** Grievous wolves were about to enter in, not sparing the flock. **For centuries this apostasy was to continue.** But looking beyond it, he said “till we all come into [margin] the unity of the faith.” It would enable the final group to draw especially close to God, as they more fully obeyed Him.

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.”—*Ephesians 4:13-15*.

**Thank God that there will be a final remnant “which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17)!**

**In the providence of God, there will be a few Christians down at the end of time who will return to all ten commandments in God’s moral law, and will remain loyal to them to the end!**

“In mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.”—*Joel 2:32*.

This remnant, existing amid the signs and wonders that usher in the great and terrible day of the Lord, is doubtless the remnant of the seed of the woman—the true church,—spoken of in Revelation 12:17. It will be the final group of God’s faithful ones on earth before the return of Christ for His people.

**They will “come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:7).**

“And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets . . . for the perfecting of the saints, . . . till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”—*Ephesians 4:11-13*.

## TESTS OF A TRUE PROPHET

**We are commanded not to despise prophets, but to test them by the Word of God.**

“Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”—*1 Thessalonians 5:20-21*.

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.”—*Isaiah 8:20*.

**Just because someone says he is a prophet does not make him one.** Comparing his life and messages by the Word of God, you will just about always find that the person making such a claim is a pretender or deceived, and is being used by Satan to confuse God’s people.

**There is a very definite set of tests by which you can identify a true prophet!** God will always provide the following twenty-two tests—so you can have certainty!

A true prophet will have visions and dreams (*Numbers 12:6*). **Others will be able to observe a true prophet in vision**, so they can know for a certainty that the guidance is from the Lord (*Numbers 24:16*). **While in vision, a prophet has no breath** (*Daniel 10:17*), **yet can speak** (*Daniel 10:16*), **keeps his eyes open** (*Numbers 24:16*), **but is unconscious of his surroundings** (*2 Corinthians 12:2, 4*).

—*The above test is especially important: A true messenger from God will have frequent visions in public, which many people will witness, and during which he will not breathe for a lengthy period of time.* Otherwise, we only have his assurance as proof that he is a divinely called prophet of God.

**A true prophet will always—always—speak in harmony with the Bible** (*Isaiah 8:20, Deuteronomy 13:1-3*). He will not present bizarre things, but will emphasize basic Bible concepts, and provide additional details about some of them.

**He will be a consistent, humble, obedient child of God** (*Jeremiah 1:4-9*). **He will exalt Christ and not self** (*2 Corinthians 10:5*). **He does not flatter the sinner but reproves him of sin** (*Ezekiel 3:17-19; Jeremiah 23:16-17*). **He will emphasize the necessity of having Jesus in the heart** (*1 John 4:1-3*). **His life will be above reproach** (*Matthew 7:15-20*). **In his personal life, he will be a kindly, courteous individual, who does not act proud** (*Jeremiah 1:4-9*).

**He does not exalt self, but Christ** (“bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ”; *2 Corinthians 10:5*). **His predictions (unless conditional on the future actions of others; Jonah 3) will always come to pass** (*Deuteronomy 18:21-22; Jeremiah 28:9; John 14:29*). **He will not cast doubt on Christ’s ministry** (*1 John 4:2-8*). His

writings will lead others to holiness (*Matthew 7:15-20*). **His writings tend to result in unifying God’s people in their understanding of Scripture** (*John 17:20-21*).

**“Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them”** (*Matthew 7:20*). Jesus said this in the latter part of the Sermon on the Mount in connection with a warning He gave about false prophets (*verse 15*). What kind of fruit is brought forth in the person’s life? What influence does his teachings have on others?

**He will speak the truth with certainty**, fearless of the consequences (for example, *2 Samuel 12:7; 1 Kings 18:18*).

**His messages will always be on a high spiritual plane.** There will be nothing cheap, commonplace, or childish about them. While his writings may deal with ordinary, everyday affairs of life, they will be done in a dignified and fitting manner. As with Scripture, the spiritual principles will be the most lofty known to the human mind.

**His messages will always be practical and useful.** There are no weird fantasies or pointless ramblings. Even His words which are given symbolic language will follow clearly discernible rules of interpretation. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (*2 Timothy 3:16-17*).

—**Miracles are no final test of a prophet!** John the Baptist did no miracles (*John 10:41*). But false prophets will (*Revelation 19:20; 13:14*).

**Thus, in conclusion, it is obvious that the contrast between true and false prophets stands out sharply.** Such divine guidance is as “a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts” (*2 Peter 1:19*).

“Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper.”—*2 Chronicles 20:20*.

## DIVINE GUIDANCE IN THE LAST DAYS

**Both men and women have received this gift—the gift of prophecy.** Here are some of the women prophets mentioned in the Bible: Miriam (*Exodus 15:20*); Deborah (*Judges 4:4*); Huldah (*2 Kings 22:14*); Anna (*Luke 2:36*); and the daughters of Philip (*Acts 21:9*).

**This gift may be given to “the weakest of the weak”** (*1 Corinthians 1:27-29*); that is, to someone who is very frail and humble, but who loves the Lord deeply.

**In December 1844, the Lord chose a deeply devotional young person** who was extremely frail

as the one to provide special guidance to the small group who would soon discover and, in spite of ridicule, accept the Bible Sabbath and other important Scriptural truths.

Miss Ellen G. Harmon (later Ellen G. White), of Portland, Maine, had not only surrendered her life to God's control, but her life trembled in the balance. "The weakest of the weak," it was expected that she would be dead within a year.

**She was at that time in a very critical condition of health.** *For a number of weeks she had scarcely been able to speak above a whisper. Both her heart and lungs were diseased.* Doctors said she was liable to drop away at any time. She could hardly breathe while lying down, so she was bolstered up in bed in a sitting position. Frequent spells of coughing and hemorrhaging from the lungs had greatly reduced her strength.

At the time she had her first vision, she was staying at the home of Mrs. Haines, an older, married lady. It was in the morning, and they were engaged in family worship. There were five Christian ladies present. The others had prayed, and Ellen began praying in a whisper,—when the power of God was felt by everyone and she was taken off into vision.

She was told that additional information would be given her later and she would be used to help guide the people of God in their study of the Word of God.

Like those in Bible times who first received such a call, she shrank from the responsibility.

Although given up by doctors, she lived and worked for seventy more years. **Unable at first to walk through a door unassisted, yet she would travel across the U.S. continent over 25 times, and journey to overseas countries. Unable initially to speak above a whisper, she would later speak thousands of times** in large meeting halls without a microphone and be heard clearly. **Not able at first to hold a pen in her trembling hand, she would later write more than any woman who ever lived, and more than most men.**

"The girl that was supposed to die before spring of 1845 did not do so. God had called her to the work of a prophet.

"The years passed; and they were filled with exhaustive traveling and writing. In 1881 her husband, James, passed away. Ellen kept at her work; and the years continued on.

"And the years brought article after article, book after book. **Gradually, 100,000 pages of handwritten manuscripts were produced. This amounted to 25 million handwritten words** (for she never used a typewriter or shorthand). **She wrote 4,500 magazine articles. Over 100 books were published.** Her first vision took place in December

1844; her last-known vision concerned the welfare of youth and was given on March 3, 1915. **She received about two thousand visions and prophetic dreams during seventy years of public ministry** (1844 to 1915).

"After her husband's death on August 6, 1881, she was a widow for thirty-four years. Not only did she encourage Christians in North America, but she spent two years in Europe (summer of 1885 to the summer of 1887) and nine years in Australia (1891 to 1900) doing the same.

"Many of her books were translated into foreign languages. *Steps to Christ*, telling the simple story of how to come to Christ and remain close by His side, has been translated into 117 languages."—*Prophet of the End*, pp. 193-194.

Commenting on the large number of her books that were translated, one biographer wrote:

**"She is the fourth most translated author (man or woman) in the history of literature, its most translated woman writer, and the most translated American author of either sex."**—Roger W. Coon, *A Gift of Light*, p. 21.

The gift still speaks through these many books, although Ellen White sleeps in the grave. She passed away in 1915 at the age of 87. Her lifework had been faithfully accomplished. **Her books live after her, and will continue to help multiplied thousands to better understand the Bible.**

**In the first little book she wrote, she said this:**

**"I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God [the Bible] as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged."**—Ellen White, *Early Writings*, 78.

**In the late 1880s, she wrote this:**

"The Lord designs to warn you, to reprove, to counsel, through the testimonies given, and to impress your minds with the importance of the truth of His Word. The written testimonies are not to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the truths of inspiration already revealed. Man's duty to God and to his fellowman has been distinctly specified in God's Word [the Bible], yet but few of you are obedient to the light given. Additional truth is not brought out; but God has through the *Testimonies* simplified the great truths already given and in His own chosen way brought them before the people to awaken and impress the mind with them, that all may be left without excuse."—Ellen White, *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 665.

**Years later, recalling what happened a week after her first vision in 1844, Ellen Wrote this:**

**"In my second vision, about a week after the first, the Lord gave me a view of the trials through which I must pass, and told me that I must go and relate to others what He had revealed to me. It was shown me that my labors would meet with**

great opposition, and that my heart would be rent with anguish; but that the grace of God would be sufficient to sustain me through all.

"After I came out of this vision I was exceedingly troubled, for it pointed out my duty to go out among the people and present the truth. **My health was so poor that I was in constant bodily suffering, and to all appearance had but a short time to live.** I was only seventeen years of age, small and frail, unused to society, and naturally so timid and retiring that it was painful for me to meet strangers.

"For several days, and far into the night, I prayed that this burden might be removed from me, and laid upon some one more capable of bearing it. But the light of duty did not change, and the words of the angel sounded continually in my ears, 'Make known to others what I have revealed to you.'

"Hitherto when the Spirit of God had urged me to duty, I had risen above myself, forgetting all fear and timidity in the thought of Jesus' love and the wonderful work He had done for me.

"But it seemed impossible for me to perform this work that was presented before me; to attempt it seemed certain failure. The trials attending it appeared more than I could endure. How could I, a child in years, go forth from place to place, unfolding to the people the holy truths of God? My heart shrank in terror from the thought . . .

"I coveted death as a release from the responsibilities that were crowding upon me. At length the sweet peace I had so long enjoyed left me, and despair again pressed upon my soul."—*Ellen G. White, Life Sketches*, 69-70.

#### **Shortly after this, the following incident occurred:**

"The company of believers in Portland were ignorant concerning the exercises of my mind that had brought me into this state of despondency; but they knew that for some reason my mind had become depressed, and they felt that this was sinful on my part, considering the gracious manner in which the Lord had manifested Himself to me. Meetings were held at my father's house, but my distress of mind was so great that I did not attend them for some time. My burden grew heavier until the agony of my spirit seemed more than I could bear.

"At length I was induced to be present at one of the meetings in my own home. The church made my case a special subject of prayer. Father Pearson, [an older man whom everyone affectionately referred to as 'father'] who in my earlier experience had opposed the manifestations of the power of God upon me, now prayed earnestly for me, and counseled me to surrender my will to the will of the Lord. Like a tender father he tried to encourage and comfort me, bidding me believe I was not forsaken by the Friend of sinners.

"I felt too weak and despondent to make any special effort for myself, but my heart united with

the petitions of my friends. I cared little now for the opposition of the world, and felt willing to make every sacrifice if only the favor of God might be restored to me.

"While prayer was offered for me, that the Lord would give me strength and courage to bear the message, the thick darkness that had encompassed me rolled back, and a sudden light came upon me. Something that seemed to me like a ball of fire struck me right over the heart. My strength was taken away, and I fell to the floor. I seemed to be in the presence of the angels. One of these holy beings again repeated the words, '**Make known to others what I have revealed to you.**'

"Father Pearson, who could not kneel on account of his rheumatism, witnessed this occurrence. When I revived sufficiently to see and hear, he rose from his chair, and said: 'I have seen a sight such as I never expected to see. A ball of fire came down from heaven, and struck Sister Ellen Harmon right on the heart. I saw it! I saw it! I can never forget it. It has changed my whole being. **Sister Ellen, have courage in the Lord. After this night I will never doubt again. We will help you henceforth, and not discourage you.**'"—*Ellen G. White, Life Sketches*, 70-71.

**D.T. Bourdeau settled the matter in his own mind in a very direct and definite way.** The following incident took place at Buck's Bridge, New York, in 1857 while Ellen was in vision:

"June 28, 1857, I saw Sister Ellen G. White in vision for the first time. I was an unbeliever in the visions; but one circumstance among others that I might mention convinced me that her visions were of God. To satisfy my mind as to whether she breathed or not [while in vision], **I first put my hand on her chest sufficiently long to know that there was no more heavings of the lungs than there would have been had she been a corpse. I then took my hand and placed it over her mouth, pinching her nostrils between my thumb and forefinger, so that it was impossible for her to exhale or inhale air, even if she had desired to do so. I held her thus with my hand about ten minutes,** long enough for her to suffocate under ordinary circumstances; she was not in the least affected by this ordeal. Since witnessing this wonderful phenomenon, I have not once been inclined to doubt the divine origin of her visions."—*Statement by D.T. Bourdeau, Battle Creek, Michigan, dated February 4, 1891; quoted in Prophet of the End*, p. 44.

**J.N. Loughborough was a pastor who was well-acquainted with Ellen. He wrote this many years later.**

"From 1853 to 1868 there was no minister in our ranks who traveled from state to state with Brother and Sister White more than myself, and I had the privilege of seeing Sister White in 'open

vision' more than forty times. **I have kept count of more than one hundred important predictions made by Sister White that have been accurately fulfilled.**"—John N. Loughborough, in *F.C. Gilbert, Divine Predictions Fulfilled*, p. 27.

**Here is one of Ellen White's predictions:**

"While at Loma Linda, Cal., April 16, 1906, there passed before me a most wonderful representation. During a vision of the night, I stood on an eminence, from which I could see houses shaken like a reed in the wind. Buildings, great and small, were falling to the ground. Pleasure resorts, theaters, hotels, and the homes of the wealthy were shaken and shattered. Many lives were blotted out of existence, and the air was filled with the shrieks of the injured and the terrified.

"The destroying angels of God were at work. One touch, and buildings so thoroughly constructed that men regarded them as secure against every danger, quickly became heaps of rubbish. There was no assurance of safety in any place. I did not feel in any special peril, but the awfulness of the scenes that passed before me I cannot find words to describe. It seemed that the forbearance of God was exhausted, and that the judgment day had come.

"The angel that stood by my side then instructed me that but few have any conception of the wickedness existing in our world today, and especially the wickedness in the large cities."—Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches*, 407-408.

"On April 18, two days after the scene of falling buildings had passed before me, I went to fill an appointment in the Carr Street church, Los Angeles. As we neared the church, **we heard the newsboys crying, 'San Francisco destroyed by an earthquake!'** With a heavy heart I read the first hastily printed news of the terrible disaster."—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 94.

**Here, for example, are three scientific predictions which were not proven to be true until many decades later.**

"Tobacco is a poison of the most deceitful and malignant kind, having an exciting, then a paralyzing, influence upon the nerves of the body. It is all the more dangerous because its effects upon the system are so slow, and at first scarcely perceivable. Multitudes have fallen victims to its poisonous influence. They have surely murdered themselves by this slow poison."—Ellen G. White, *Temperance*, p. 57 (1864).

"Whatever disturbs the circulation of the electric currents in the nervous system lessens the strength of the vital powers, and the result is a deadening of the sensibilities of the mind."—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*, Vol. 2, p. 347 (1868).

"The meat is served reeking with fat, because it suits the perverted taste. Both the blood and the fat of animals are consumed as a luxury. But the

Lord gave special directions that these should not be eaten. Why? Because **their use would make a diseased current of blood in the human system.**"—Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, 393-394 (1896).

**The late Clive McCay, Ph.D., professor of nutrition at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, discovered her health writings quite by accident and was astounded by them. He wrote this in 1959:**

"Every modern specialist in nutrition whose life is dedicated to human welfare must be impressed in four respects by the writings and leadership of Ellen G. White.

"In the first place, **her basic concepts about the relation between diet and health have been verified to an unusual degree by scientific advances of the past decades.** Someone may attempt to explain this remarkable fact by saying: 'Mrs. White simply borrowed her ideas from others.' **But how would she know which ideas to borrow** and which to reject out of the bewildering array of theories and health teachings current in the nineteenth century? She would have had to be a most amazing person, with knowledge beyond her time, in order to do this successfully!

"In the second place, **everyone who attempts to teach nutrition can hardly conceive of a leadership such as that of Mrs. White that was able to induce a substantial number of people to improve their diets.**

"In the third place, one can only speculate about **the large number of sufferers during the past century who could have had improved health if they had accepted the teachings of Mrs. White . .**

"In spite of the fact that the works of Mrs. White were written long before the advent of modern scientific nutrition, **no better overall guide is available today.**"—Clive M. McCay, in *Review and Herald*, February 26, 1959.

**Here are several excerpts from a single chapter in one of Ellen White's many books:**

"Whatever your anxieties and trials, spread out your case before the Lord. **Your spirit will be braced for endurance.** The way will be opened for you to disentangle yourself from embarrassment and difficulty. **The weaker and more helpless you know yourself to be, the stronger will you become in His strength.** The heavier your burdens, the more blessed the rest in casting them upon the Burden Bearer . .

"There are many whose hearts are aching under a load of care because they seek to reach the world's standard. They have chosen its service, accepted its perplexities, adopted its customs. Thus their character is marred, and their life made a

weariness. In order to gratify ambition and worldly desires, they wound the conscience, and bring upon themselves an additional burden of remorse. **The continual worry is wearing out the life forces. Our Lord desires them to lay aside this yoke of bondage. He invites them to accept His yoke;** He says, 'My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.' He bids them seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and His promise is that all things needful to them for this life shall be added. **Worry is blind, and cannot discern the future; but Jesus sees the end from the beginning. In every difficulty He has His way prepared to bring relief.** Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us, of which we know nothing. **Those who accept the one principle of making the service and honor of God supreme will find perplexities vanish, and a plain path before their feet . .**

"In the heart of Christ, where reigned perfect harmony with God, there was perfect peace. He was never elated by applause, nor dejected by censure or disappointment. Amid the greatest opposition and the most cruel treatment, He was still of good courage. **But many who profess to be His followers have an anxious, troubled heart, because they are afraid to trust themselves with God. They do not make a complete surrender to Him;** for they shrink from the consequences that such a surrender may involve. **Unless they do make this surrender, they cannot find peace.**

"It is the love of self that brings unrest. **When we are born from above, the same mind will be in us that was in Jesus,** the mind that led Him to humble Himself that we might be saved. **Then we shall not be seeking the highest place.** We shall desire to sit at the feet of Jesus, and learn of Him. We shall understand that the value of our work does not consist in making a show and noise in the world, and in being active and zealous in our own strength. The value of our work is in proportion to the impartation of the Holy Spirit. **Trust in God brings holier qualities of mind, so that in patience we may possess our souls . .**

"**Those who take Christ at His word, and surrender their souls to His keeping, their lives to His ordering, will find peace and quietude.** Nothing of the world can make them sad when Jesus makes them glad by His presence. **In perfect acquiescence there is perfect rest.** The Lord says, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee.' Isa. 26:3. **Our lives may seem a tangle; but as we commit ourselves to the wise Master Worker, He will bring out the pattern of life and character that will be to His own glory.** And that character which

expresses the glory—character—of Christ will be received into the Paradise of God. A renovated race shall walk with Him in white, for they are worthy.

**"As through Jesus we enter into rest, heaven begins here.** We respond to His invitation, Come, learn of Me, and in thus coming we begin the life eternal. **Heaven is a ceaseless approaching to God through Christ.** The longer we are in the heaven of bliss, the more and still more of glory will be opened to us; and **the more we know of God, the more intense will be our happiness. As we walk with Jesus in this life, we may be filled with His love, satisfied with His presence.** All that human nature can bear, we may receive here. **But what is this compared with the hereafter? There 'are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.** They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.' Rev. 7:15-17."—*Ellen G. White, Desire of Ages, 329-332 (pp. 328-331 in the Harvestime Books edition).*

**As we look back over the history of our world, we can see that Satan has consistently sought to confuse minds as to the character of God, and the responsibility of created beings to obey Him and honor His holy law—which represents His character and is the foundation of His government.**

For thousands of years, the devil has tried to corrupt truth, cast the blame for all mankind's problems on God, and deceive them into believing his lies and joining with him in his rebellion.

**In His infinite wisdom, God recognized that, down here at the end of time, basic truths in their fullness—which have long been buried under the rubbish of error—needed to be restored to their gleaming purity.** Our Creator wanted to lead His people back to the simple, basic doctrines taught in the Scriptures.

**So in this end-time of world's history, God wisely decided to select a special messenger to provide guidance** which could help us set aside all the error—and pull out the precious gems of truth which were there all the time in our precious Bible! He used the most humble, frail individual available, who was totally reliant on Him for daily strength, to fulfill this task.

**It is for this reason that the Spirit of Prophecy was restored to us in these last days.** Fortunately, by the completion of seventy years of writing ministry, all the truths which were needed to help us guard against deception and prepare our lives for

heaven—were included in the books authored by Ellen White.

The best single book on the life of Christ, our pattern and Redeemer, is her book, *The Desire of Ages*.

The best single book explaining the truths lost during the Dark Ages, along with crucial events just ahead of us in the coming crisis before Jesus returns in the clouds for His people, is the book, *The Great Controversy*.

Both of these books are available in paperbacks and hardback editions from Harvestime Books. (See the back of the book you are now reading.)

In addition, low-cost paperback editions of a number of other important Spirit of Prophecy books are also available.

A brief but excellent biography of the life and work of Ellen White is to be found in the present author's book, *Prophet of the End*. (See back of this book.)

#### MY COMMITMENT

I thank you, wonderful Father in heaven, for helping me discover such comforting writings as those penned by Ellen White. Help me, day by day, to be as faithful to the tasks which Thou dost daily give me to do, as Ellen was in her time.

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**COMING NEXT**—A complete chapter from *The Great Controversy*, by Ellen White, which was published in 1888 and later reprinted in 1911. **It will provide you with a panoramic overview of the entire, age-long conflict between Christ and Satan for the control of our world.** From start to finish, God and Christ practiced love and self-sacrifice, while Satan incited angels and men to selfishness and rebellion against the moral law of God, the foundation of God's government throughout the universe.

# The Origin and End of Evil

*And a View of Eternity Afterward*

**This remarkable chapter, by Ellen G. White, carefully explains the origin, nature, and final end of sin. It reveals the objectives that Lucifer had in mind when he first rebelled in heaven. For the first time someone had become self-centered and desired only to advantage himself!**

**Becoming "Satan," the "adversary," he has continued that rebellion in our planet, and everyone here is being tested as to whether he will be loyal and obedient to his Creator, or will yield to the selfish temptations which Satan offers him.**

**The controversy is fought anew in everyone who has ever lived.**

**This chapter also makes it clear that there is no excuse for sin, and that, in spite of the sufferings we may experience in this evil world, if we will remain true to God—He will abundantly reward us when this great controversy has ended, and we are forever with Christ in a better world.**

**—The remainder of this chapter consists of all of chapter 29, "The Origin of Evil," from the book, *The Great Controversy*, written by Ellen G. White.**

**To many minds, the origin of sin and the reason for its existence are a source of great perplexity. They see the work of evil, with its terrible results of woe and desolation, and they question how all this can exist under the sovereignty of One who is infinite in wisdom, in power, and in love. Here is a mystery, of which they find no explanation. And in their uncertainty and doubt, they are blinded to truths plainly revealed in God's Word, and essential to salvation. There are those who, in their inquiries concerning the existence of sin, endeavor to search into that which God has never revealed; hence they find no solution of their difficulties; and such as are actuated by a disposition to doubt and cavil, seize upon this as an excuse for rejecting the words of Holy Writ. Others, however, fail of a satisfactory understanding of the great problem of evil, from the fact that tradition and misinterpretation have obscured the teaching of the Bible concerning the character of God, the nature of His government, and the principles of His dealing with sin.**

**It is impossible to so explain the origin of sin as to give a reason for its existence. Yet enough**

**may be understood concerning both the origin and the final disposition of sin, to fully make manifest the justice and benevolence of God in all His dealings with evil.** Nothing is more plainly taught in Scripture than that **God was in nowise responsible for the entrance of sin**; that there was no arbitrary withdrawal of divine grace, no deficiency in the divine government, that gave occasion for the uprising of rebellion. **Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it, is to defend it.** Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin. **Our only definition of sin is that given in the Word of God; it is "the transgression of the law;"** it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.

**Before the entrance of evil, there was peace and joy throughout the universe. All was in perfect harmony with the Creator's will.** Love for God was supreme, love for one another impartial. Christ the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father,—one in nature, in character, and in purpose,—the only being in all the universe that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. By Christ, the Father wrought in the creation of all heavenly beings. "By Him were all things created, that are in Heaven, . . . whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers" (Colossians 1:16); and to Christ, equally with the Father, all Heaven gave allegiance.

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. **God desires from all His creatures the service of love,—homage that springs from an intelligent appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance,** and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service.

**But there was one that chose to pervert this freedom. Sin originated with him, who, next to Christ, had been most honored of God, and who stood highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of Heaven. Before his fall, Lucifer was first of the covering cherubs, holy and undefiled.** "Thus saith the Lord God: Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering." "Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast

created, till iniquity was found in thee." Ezekiel 28:12-15.

Lucifer might have remained in favor with God, beloved and honored by all the angelic host, exercising his noble powers to bless others and to glorify His Maker. But, says the prophet, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness." Ezekiel 28:17. **Little by little, Lucifer came to indulge a desire for self-exaltation.** "Thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God." "Thou hast said: . . . I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation." "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." Ezekiel 28:6; Isaiah 14:13, 14. **Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of His creatures, it was Lucifer's endeavor to win their service and homage to himself.** And, coveting the honor which the infinite Father had bestowed upon His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power which it was the prerogative of Christ alone to wield.

**All Heaven had rejoiced to reflect the Creator's glory and to show forth His praise. And while God was thus honored, all had been peace and gladness. But a note of discord now marred the celestial harmonies.** The service and exaltation of self, contrary to the Creator's plan, awakened forebodings of evil in minds to whom God's glory was supreme. **The heavenly councils pleaded with Lucifer.** The Son of God presented before him the greatness, the goodness, and the justice of the Creator, and the sacred, unchanging nature of His law. God Himself had established the order of Heaven; and in departing from it, Lucifer would dishonor his Maker, and bring ruin upon himself. **But the warning, given in infinite love and mercy, only aroused a spirit of resistance. Lucifer allowed jealousy of Christ to prevail, and he became the more determined.**

**Pride in his own glory nourished the desire for supremacy.** The high honors conferred upon Lucifer were not appreciated as the gift of God, and called forth no gratitude to the Creator. He gloried in his brightness and exaltation, and aspired to be equal with God. He was beloved and revered by the heavenly host. Angels delighted to execute his commands, and he was clothed with wisdom and glory above them all. **Yet the Son of God was the acknowledged sovereign of Heaven, one in power and authority with the Father. In all the counsels of God, Christ was a participant, while Lucifer was not permitted thus to enter into the divine purposes.** "Why," questioned this mighty angel, "should Christ have the supremacy? Why is He thus

honored above Lucifer?"

**Leaving his place in the immediate presence of God, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels.** Working with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealing his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God, **he endeavored to excite dissatisfaction concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that they imposed an unnecessary restraint.** Since their natures were holy, he urged that the angels should obey the dictates of their own will. He sought to create sympathy for himself, by representing that God had dealt unjustly with him in bestowing supreme honor upon Christ. **He claimed that in aspiring to greater power and honor he was not aiming at self-exaltation, but was seeking to secure liberty for all the inhabitants of Heaven, that by this means they might attain to a higher state of existence.**

**God, in His great mercy, bore long with Lucifer.** He was not immediately degraded from his exalted station when he first indulged the spirit of discontent, nor even when he began to present his false claims before the loyal angels. Long was he retained in Heaven. Again and again he was offered pardon, on condition of repentance and submission. **Such efforts, as only infinite love and wisdom could devise, were made to convince him of his error. The spirit of discontent had never before been known in Heaven. Lucifer himself did not at first see whither he was drifting;** he did not understand the real nature of his feelings. **But as his dissatisfaction was proved to be without cause, Lucifer was convinced that he was in the wrong, that the divine claims were just, and that he ought to acknowledge them as such before all Heaven. Had he done this, he might have saved himself and many angels.** He had not at this time fully cast off his allegiance to God. Though he had forsaken his position as covering cherub, yet if he had been willing to return to God, acknowledging the Creator's wisdom, and satisfied to fill the place appointed him in God's great plan, he would have been reinstated in his office. **But pride forbade him to submit. He persistently defended his own course, maintained that he had no need of repentance, and fully committed himself, in the great controversy, against his Maker.**

**All the powers of his mastermind were now bent to the work of deception, to secure the sympathy of the angels that had been under his command.** Even the fact that Christ had warned and counseled him, was perverted to serve his traitorous designs. To those whose loving trust bound them most closely to him, Satan had represented that

he was wrongly judged, that his position was not respected, and that his liberty was to be abridged. **From misrepresentation of the words of Christ, he passed to prevarication and direct falsehood,** accusing the Son of God of a design to humiliate him before the inhabitants of Heaven. He sought also to make a false issue between himself and the loyal angels. **All whom he could not subvert and bring fully to his side, he accused of indifference to the interests of heavenly beings. The very work which he himself was doing, he charged upon those who remained true to God.** And to sustain his charge of God's injustice toward him, he resorted to misrepresentation of the words and acts of the Creator. **It was his policy to perplex the angels with subtle arguments concerning the purposes of God. Everything that was simple he shrouded in mystery,** and by artful perversion cast doubt upon the plainest statements of Jehovah. His high position, in such close connection with the divine administration, gave greater force to his representations, and many were induced to unite with him in rebellion against Heaven's authority.

**God in His wisdom permitted Satan to carry forward his work, until the spirit of disaffection ripened into active revolt. It was necessary for his plans to be fully developed, that their true nature and tendency might be seen by all.** Lucifer, as the anointed cherub, had been highly exalted; he was greatly loved by the heavenly beings, and his influence over them was strong. God's government included not only the inhabitants of Heaven, but of all the worlds that He had created; and **Satan thought that if he could carry the angels of Heaven with him in rebellion, he could carry also the other worlds.** He had artfully presented his side of the question, employing sophistry and fraud to secure his objects. His power to deceive was very great, and by disguising himself in a cloak of falsehood he had gained an advantage. **Even the loyal angels could not fully discern his character, or see to what his work was leading.**

**Satan had been so highly honored, and all his acts were so clothed with mystery, that it was difficult to disclose to the angels the true nature of his work. Until fully developed, sin would not appear the evil thing it was.** Heretofore it had had no place in the universe of God, and holy beings had no conception of its nature and malignity. They could not discern the terrible consequences that would result from setting aside the divine law. **Satan had, at first, concealed his work under a specious profession of loyalty to God. He claimed to be seeking to promote the honor of God, the stability of His government, and the good of all**

**the inhabitants of Heaven.** While instilling discontent into the minds of the angels under him, he had artfully made it appear that he was seeking to remove dissatisfaction. When he urged that changes be made in the order and laws of God's government, it was under the pretense that these were necessary in order to preserve harmony in Heaven.

**In his dealing with sin, God could employ only righteousness and truth. Satan could use what God could not—flattery and deceit.** He had sought to falsify the word of God, and had misrepresented His plan of government before the angels, claiming that God was not just in laying laws and rules upon the inhabitants of Heaven; that in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures, He was seeking merely the exaltation of himself. **Therefore it must be demonstrated before the inhabitants of Heaven as well as of all the worlds, that God's government was just, His law perfect.** Satan had made it appear that he himself was seeking to promote the good of the universe. The true character of the usurper, and his real object, must be understood by all. He must have time to manifest himself by his wicked works.

**The discord which his own course had caused in Heaven, Satan charged upon the law and government of God. All evil he declared to be the result of the divine administration.** He claimed that it was his own object to improve upon the statutes of Jehovah. Therefore it was necessary that he should demonstrate the nature of his claims, and show the working out of his proposed changes in the divine law. **His own work must condemn him. Satan had claimed from the first that he was not in rebellion. The whole universe must see the deceiver unmasked.**

**Even when it was decided that he could no longer remain in Heaven, infinite wisdom did not destroy Satan.** Since the service of love can alone be acceptable to God, the allegiance of His creatures must rest upon a conviction of His justice and benevolence. **The inhabitants of Heaven and of other worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not then have seen the justice and mercy of God in the destruction of Satan.** Had he been immediately blotted from existence, they would have served God from fear, rather than from love. The influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed, nor would the spirit of rebellion have been utterly eradicated. **Evil must be permitted to come to maturity. For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages, Satan must more fully develop his principles,** that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light

by all created beings, that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability of His law might forever be placed beyond all question.

**Satan's rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages, a perpetual testimony to the nature and terrible results of sin. The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority.** It would testify that with the existence of God's government and His law is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He has made. Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy intelligences, to prevent them from being deceived as to the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin, and suffering its punishment.

**To the very close of the controversy in Heaven, the great usurper continued to justify himself. When it was announced that with all his sympathizers he must be expelled from the abodes of bliss, then the rebel leader boldly avowed his contempt for the Creator's law.** He reiterated his claim that angels needed no control, but should be left to follow their own will, which would ever guide them right. **He denounced the divine statutes as a restriction of their liberty, and declared that it was his purpose to secure the abolition of law;** that, freed from this restraint, the hosts of Heaven might enter upon a more exalted, more glorious state of existence.

**With one accord, Satan and his host threw the blame of their rebellion wholly upon Christ, declaring that if they had not been reprov'd, they would never have rebelled.** Thus stubborn and defiant in their disloyalty, seeking vainly to overthrow the government of God, yet blasphemously claiming to be themselves the innocent victims of oppressive power, **the arch-rebel and all his sympathizers were at last banished from Heaven.**

**The same spirit that prompted rebellion in Heaven, still inspires rebellion on earth. Satan has continued with men the same policy which he pursued with the angels.** His spirit now reigns in the children of disobedience. Like him they seek to break down the restraints of the law of God, and promise men liberty through transgression of its precepts. Reproof of sin still arouses the spirit of hatred and resistance. When God's messages of warning are brought home to the conscience, **Satan leads men to justify themselves, and to seek the sympathy of others in their course of sin. Instead of correcting their errors, they excite indignation against the reprov'er,** as if he were the sole cause of difficulty. From the days of righteous Abel to our own

time, such is the spirit which has been displayed toward those who dare to condemn sin.

By the same misrepresentation of the character of God as he had practiced in Heaven, causing Him to be regarded as severe and tyrannical, **Satan induced man to sin. And having succeeded thus far, he declared that God's unjust restrictions had led to man's fall, as they had led to his own rebellion.**

But the Eternal One Himself proclaims His character: "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Exodus 34:6, 7.

**In the banishment of Satan from Heaven, God declared His justice, and maintained the honor of His throne. But when man had sinned through yielding to the deceptions of this apostate spirit, God gave an evidence of His love by yielding up His only begotten Son to die for the fallen race.** In the atonement the character of God is revealed. The mighty argument of the cross demonstrates to the whole universe that the course of sin which Lucifer had chosen was in nowise chargeable upon the government of God.

**In the contest between Christ and Satan, during the Saviour's earthly ministry, the character of the great deceiver was unmasked. Nothing could so effectually have uprooted Satan from the affections of the heavenly angels and the whole loyal universe as did his cruel warfare upon the world's Redeemer.** The daring blasphemy of his demand that Christ should pay him homage, his presumptuous boldness in bearing Him to the mountain summit and the pinnacle of the temple, the malicious intent betrayed in urging Him to cast Himself down from the dizzy height, the unsleeping malice that hunted Him from place to place, inspiring the hearts of priests and people to reject His love, and at the last to cry, "Crucify Him! crucify Him!"—all this excited the amazement and indignation of the universe.

**It was Satan that prompted the world's rejection of Christ. The prince of evil exerted all his power and cunning to destroy Jesus; for he saw that the Saviour's mercy and love, His compassion and pitying tenderness, were representing to the world the character of God.** Satan contested every claim put forth by the Son of God, and employed men as His agents to fill the Saviour's life with suffering and sorrow. The sophistry and falsehood by which he had sought to hinder the work of Jesus, the hatred manifested through the children of disobedience, his cruel accusations against Him whose life was one of unexampled goodness, all

sprung from deep-seated revenge. **The pent-up fires of envy and malice, hatred and revenge, burst forth on Calvary against the Son of God, while all Heaven gazed upon the scene in silent horror.**

When the great sacrifice had been consummated, Christ ascended on high, refusing the adoration of angels until He had presented the request, "I will that they also, whom thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." John 17:24. Then with inexpressible love and power came forth the answer from the Father's throne, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." Hebrews 1:6. Not a stain rested upon Jesus. His humiliation ended, His sacrifice completed, there was given unto Him a name that is above every name.

**Now the guilt of Satan stood forth without excuse. He had revealed his true character as a liar and a murderer.** It was seen that the very same spirit with which he ruled the children of men, who were under his power, he would have manifested had he been permitted to control the inhabitants of Heaven. **He had claimed that the transgression of God's law would bring liberty and exaltation; but it was seen to result in bondage and degradation.**

**Satan's lying charges against the divine character and government appeared in their true light.** He had accused God of seeking merely the exaltation of Himself in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures, and had declared that while the Creator exacted self-denial from all others, He Himself practiced no self-denial, made no sacrifice. **Now it was seen that for the salvation of a fallen and sinful race, the Ruler of the universe had made the greatest sacrifice which love could make;** for "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Corinthians 5:19. It was seen, also, that while Lucifer had opened the door for the entrance of sin, by his desire for honor and supremacy, **Christ had, in order to destroy sin, humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death.**

**God had manifested His abhorrence of the principles of rebellion. All Heaven saw His justice revealed, both in the condemnation of Satan and in the redemption of man.** Lucifer had declared that if the law of God was changeless, and its penalty could not be remitted, every transgressor must be forever debarred from the Creator's favor. He had claimed that the sinful race were placed beyond redemption, and were therefore his rightful prey. **But the death of Christ was an argument in man's behalf that could not be overthrown.** The penalty of the law fell upon him who was equal with God, and man was free to accept the righteousness of Christ, and by a life of penitence and humiliation

to triumph, as the Son of God had triumphed, over the power of Satan. Thus God is just, and yet the justifier of all who believe in Jesus.

**But it was not merely to accomplish the redemption of man that Christ came to the earth to suffer and to die. He came to "magnify the law" and to "make it honorable."** Not alone that the inhabitants of this world might regard the law as it should be regarded; but it was to demonstrate to all the worlds of the universe that God's law is unchangeable. **Could its claims have been set aside, then the Son of God need not have yielded up His life to atone for its transgression. The death of Christ proves it immutable.** And the sacrifice to which infinite love impelled the Father and the Son, that sinners might be redeemed, demonstrates to all the universe—what nothing less than this plan of atonement could have sufficed to do—that justice and mercy are the foundation of the law and government of God.

**In the final execution of the Judgment it will be seen that no cause for sin exists.** When the Judge of all the earth shall demand of Satan, "Why hast thou rebelled against Me, and robbed Me of the subjects of My kingdom?" the originator of evil can render no excuse. Every mouth will be stopped, and all the hosts of rebellion will be speechless.

**The cross of Calvary, while it declares the law immutable, proclaims to the universe that the wages of sin is death. In the Saviour's expiring cry, "It is finished," the death-knell of Satan was rung. The great controversy which had been so long in progress was then decided, and the final eradication of evil was made certain.** The Son of God passed through the portals of the tomb, that "through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Hebrews 2:14. Lucifer's desire for self-exaltation had led him to say, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . I will be like the Most High." God declares, "I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth, . . . and never shalt thou be anymore." Isaiah 14:13, 14; Ezekiel 28:18, 19. When **"the day cometh that shall burn as an oven," "all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up,** saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Malachi 4:1.

**The whole universe will have become witnesses to the nature and results of sin. And its utter extermination, which in the beginning would have brought fear to angels and dishonor to God, will now vindicate His love and establish His honor before a universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. Never**

**will evil again be manifest.** Says the Word of God, “Affliction shall not rise up the second time.” Nahum 1:9. The law of God, which Satan has reproached as the yoke of bondage, will be honored as the law of liberty. **A tested and proved creation will never again be turned from allegiance to Him whose character has been fully manifested before them as fathomless love and infinite wisdom.**

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—*The end of Chapter 29, “The Origin of Evil,” from the book, The Great Controversy, by Ellen G. White (pp. 492-504 in the standard edition; pp. 525-537 in the Harvestime Books edition). See back of this book.*

#### **MY COMMITMENT**

Father in heaven, help me to prove faithful to Thee in a world which Satan is trying to wrest from Thy control. Although I may suffer hardships, yet they are nothing in comparison with what Christ endured in order that I might be saved. Through Christ’s enabling grace, may I be a loyal subject, obedient to Thy law, and standing on Thy side in the battle between good and evil.

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**COMING NEXT**—The Bible sets before us a number of standards which are invaluable helpers on the pathway to eternal life. We can be thankful for everything God has blessed us with.

A Complete Evangelistic Sermon: Chapter Thirty-Two

# Higher Standards in Christ

*Toward a Better Way of Life*

**Every time we do what God tells us in the Bible, we are deeply blessed as a result.** He is such a wonderful heavenly Father; always caring, always continually guiding, as, trusting in Jesus, we open that precious book and study it with prayer and an intention to obey its counsels. *Here is a poem to memorize. You will need it later:*

"No matter what may be the test, God will take care of you. Lean, weary one, upon His breast, God will take care of you."

## LIVING ON A HIGHER STANDARD

In one of J. Wilbur Chapman's meetings, a young man arose and gave this unusual testimony:

**"I got off at the Pennsylvania depot one day as a tramp, and for a year I begged on the streets for a living.** One day I touched a man on the shoulder and said, 'Mister, please give me a dime.'

"But as soon as I saw his face, I recognized my aged father.

**"Throwing his arms around me, he cried, 'I have found you, I have found you! All I have is yours!'**

"Just think of it, that I as a tramp, stood begging my father for ten cents, when for eighteen years he had been looking for me, to give me all he was worth!

"I went home with him that day and he led me to Christ as my Saviour."

**Such is the love of the heavenly Father for His children who have wandered so far from Him.**

"My God, how endless is Thy love! Thy gifts are every evening new; And morning mercies from above, Gently distill like early dew.

"I yield my powers to Thy command, To Thee I consecrate my days; Perpetual blessing from Thy hand, Demand perpetual songs of praise."

—Isaac Watts

**We all need a guide through the many strait places in life as much as the sailor needs a pilot over the sandy bar or up the rocky river, and where is this guide to be found? God points us to the Bible.** Inspired by Him, written by holy men, it points out with great clearness and precision the duties of both old and young. It elevates the mind, softens the heart, and imparts gladness and holy joy to the spirit.

The Bible presents a perfect standard of character; it is an infallible guide under all circumstances,

even to the end of the journey of life. We should take it as our constant guide, the rule of our daily life.

**In Washington, D.C., a standard is kept of each weight, measure, and quality of merchandise. God also has an unchanging standard for all Christian character.**

Satan seeks to gradually enter, with the objective of overcoming us and taking control of our lives. But, in the strength of Christ, we must draw a definite line so that he cannot have the opportunity to ruin our lives.

But only by the enabling grace of Christ can this be done. As we yield our lives to His control, He will give us strength to resist the temptations of the enemy.

"When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him."—Isaiah 59:19.

**Standards of recreation—God wants us to be very cautious regarding the types of recreation and entertainment that we engage in.** It is so easy to keep letting down our guard, and indulging in things which will only injure us—and lead us ever closer to full capture by Satan.

**The Israelites were captured by the devil, when they decided to indulge in wild frivolity.** As a result, many were lost. The entire story is told in Exodus 32 and 33. Commenting on it, the Apostle Paul later wrote:

"But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. **Now these things were our examples,** to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."—1 Corinthians 10:5-7.

**The craze for entertainment, with the loose morals which so often follows, is an evidence that we are living in the last days.**

**"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.** For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, **lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.**"—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

**We must keep our eyes steadily fixed on Christ, our divine Pattern, and live godly lives.**

**"In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works:** in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you . . . denying ungod-

liness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”—*Titus* 2:7-8, 12-13.

**Here are several important principles about recreation vs. amusement:**

**Recreation is quite different than amusement. Genuine recreation is true to its name: “re-creation.” It tends to strengthen and build up.** Calling us aside from our ordinary cares and occupations, it provides refreshment for mind and body, and thus enables us to return with new vigor to the earnest work of life.

**But living for amusement debases the spiritual nature. Amusement sought only for the sake of pleasure is often carried to excess.** It absorbs the energies that are required for useful work and thus proves a hindrance to life’s true success. Devoting our physical powers to amusements counteracts the working of the Holy Spirit. Loving the company of pleasure seekers produces an aversion to religion.

**We want to use godly principles, which Heaven can approve, when considering a form of recreation.** Does it refresh body and mind so it can more vigorously return to daily tasks; or is it becoming an addictive routine that occupies hours in reading, viewing, or doing that which weakens the body and draws the mind away from God? Be guarded about what you read, see, and do.

**Standards of clothing—It has been said that a person is dressed the best when his or her clothing is neat and clean, yet is not noticed.** Here is a Bible passage which compares excessive adornment with a simple, godly attitude—which is always far more attractive.

“Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; **But let it be the hidden man of the heart**, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of **a meek and quiet spirit**, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves.”—*1 Peter* 3:3-5.

**Peter is here urging us to guard against unnecessary adornment.** He is telling us to dress modestly and not in such a manner as to attract attention to ourselves.

“In like manner also, that women adorn themselves **in modest apparel**, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.”—*1 Timothy* 2:9-10.

Christians should remember that **real beauty is found in neatness, cleanliness, and godliness.**

“Let your moderation be known unto all men.”—

*Philippians* 4:5.

**Are we preparing for heaven? Paul counsels us to lay aside every hindrance to the development of Christian character.**

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, **let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us**, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”—*Hebrews* 12:1-2.

“Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? **He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity**, nor sworn deceitfully.”—*Psalms* 24:3-4.

**Many throw away eternal life for the pleasures of a wicked world.** The historian Gibbon tells us that when Galerius sacked the camp of the Persians, a common soldier found a shining leather bag filled with pearls. He carefully kept the bag, which he prized, but threw away the invaluable pearls. **Men and women who throw away eternal life for the pleasures of a wicked world are less wise than this simple soldier** in the Roman legion.

“**The fashion of this world passeth away.**”

—*1 Corinthians* 7:31

**If we walk as Jesus walked, we shall be modest in our appearance.** God is searching hearts for evidence of meekness. Christians have no Bible authority for following extreme fashions or excessive adornment.

“But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and **follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.** Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.”—*1 Timothy* 6:11-12.

#### GENUINE CHRISTIANS ARE DIFFERENT

**God’s children are “peculiar people.” They are different than the world.** They have different tastes and interests. They have different books and reading matter. They have different things in their living room. **They are not trying to get as close to the world as they can. They are traveling a different road;** one that will eventually lead them to the land of eternal happiness.

“**But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people;** that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”—*1 Peter* 2:9.

The marginal reading for the phrase “a peculiar people” is “a purchased people.” Those who are purchased no longer belong to themselves. May we

never forget this.

**We are members of the royal family in heaven!** What a glorious privilege to be accepted as children of the King!

**"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil . . . Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth."**—*John 17:15, 17.*

**Always ask yourself these questions:** "What would Jesus do if He were in my place?" "Is this a place where Jesus would want me to go?" If in doubt—*don't!*

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit . . . For **they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh;** but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit."—*Romans 8:1, 5.*

Christians cannot forget that they are in the world, but they are never to let the world get inside them.

**"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."**—*Proverbs 16:25.*

The liquor, beer, and cigarette ads always show happy, smiling people. They never show what those poisons do to the people afterward. **In the beginning, sin never shows itself for what it is.** Satan poses as an angel of light. His decoys are always camouflaged to trap innocent souls to their spiritual ruin.

**Experience teaches us that much of modern amusement is neither pleasure nor joy.** A loud laugh is no evidence of a happy heart, but it indicates a shallow mind or hides a broken heart. Pleasure that does not flow out of a heart filled with the love of God brings no peace.

A little girl was blowing bubbles, when someone nearby said, "I'll give you a nickel for a bubble." Delighted, she reached out her hand to catch one of the bubbles. But when she opened her hand there was nothing in it. Such are pleasures of this life.

**Are you looking for lasting and true happiness? You will never find it in the nightclub, at the dance hall, or in the theater.** It is not in the pool room nor in the card party. Novels and comic strips can never satisfy a heart that is in search of true happiness. Jazzy music leaves the heart empty; it does not satisfy. Radio and television can never supply the inner longings of one in search of lasting peace and contentment. Read the warning of Scripture:

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that **for all these things God will**

**bring thee into judgment."**—*Ecclesiastes 11:9.*

**We want to stay as far from sin as we can! A rich prince in the Orient advertised for a coachman,** and three men applied for the position. He led them to a great precipice and asked each in turn how near to it he dared to drive the coach.

The first looked over the edge of the chasm and said that he would be willing to drive the royal coach within three feet of the danger spot. The second, anxious to outdo the first, asserted that he would drive within two feet of the edge.

The third backed away from the cliff and said to the prince, "Sir, I'd drive as far as possible from the edge of that precipice."

"You are the man I want," said the prince, "for I don't intend to have anyone drive me to my death unnecessarily."

**"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"**—*Matthew 16:26.*

**The life of a true Christian is running over with happiness.** Christians have more to make them happy than anyone else. **They do not need to search endlessly for fleeting pleasures;** for the more they share the happiness they have in Christ, the more they have.

**If faithful, God will give us in heaven the genuine pleasures of living in a sinless creation with wonderful friends everywhere! This is something we dare not miss.**

"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."—*Psalms 16:11.*

#### MY COMMITMENT

Father in heaven, whatever the cost—I must be with Thee in heaven. Whatever it takes, I want it. Help me to pattern my life after the principles and standards Thou hast given in Thy Holy Word. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—An encouraging truth which will help deepen your close walk with God even more.

A Complete Evangelistic Sermon: Chapter Thirty-Three

# God and I Are Partners

*Toward a Better Way of Life*

**"God and I are partners.**

**"God and I raised fifty acres of corn.** He created the soil, and laid deep reservoirs of moisture beneath it. I plowed the land, harrowed it, and buried the grains of corn in neat rows.

"I left the planted field in His care. The warmth of His sunshine played upon it. Tiny green shoots appeared.

"I cultivated the ground as God worked by my side. **If He had not done His work well, I should have failed.** If I had not done my work well, there would have been no crop.

"With my two horses I drove up and down the long rows. God used 121,000 horses in the field—2,420 horsepower units of divine energy per acre every moment that the sun shone.

**"Throughout the long summer, He watered the growing crop,** not like the meager dripping of a garden hose; He distributed 165,000 tons of water over the fifty acres of earth.

"I worked 500 hours on our fifty acres. **God worked more than six hours to my one**—twenty-four hours a day all summer without pausing a minute.

"Even after I had finished my work and left the field, He stayed on. **Without His continual miracles I should have had no corn for my labor.** Each grain I planted in May became 1,200 grains in September.

"The corn we raised is His and mine, for we are fellow workers. God and I are partners."—*Baptist Leader, June 1943.*

**Partnership with God!** One of the most fascinating possibilities of the Christian life is that of entering into partnership with the Creator.

**The God who created our world could manage it without our help, if He chose.** He could take the gospel to the world without our assistance. He could use angels to be evangelists to take the gospel to the world.

**The great Shepherd could go out alone to find the lost sheep. Instead, He asks us to go with Him**—and seek out the lost, and help provide the funds so full-time workers can share the message of salvation.

Years ago, the *Presbyterian Record* reported:

**"Horace Greely, a leading New York City newspaper editor, once received a letter from a**

**woman stating that her church was in distressing financial straits.** They had tried every device they could think of—fairs, strawberry festivals, oyster suppers, a donkey party, turkey banquets, Japanese weddings, poverty sociables, mock marriages, grab bags, box sociables, dances, and bingo games. She then asked, 'Would Mr. Greely be so kind as to suggest some new device to keep the struggling church from disbanding?' The editor replied, 'Try religion.'

**A genuine, personal relationship with Christ, and the study of God's Word will bring the answers.** The Bible says:

**"Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase.** So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."—*Proverbs 3:9-10.*

**The Lord has claimed one part of our income as especially belonging to Him:**

"And **all the tithe of the land**, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, **is the Lord's:** it is holy unto the Lord."—*Leviticus 27:30.*

**The tithe was devoted to the support of His ministry;** those who were giving their full time to converting souls and helping those in the church.

"And, behold, **I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel** for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation."—*Numbers 18:21.*

**The Apostle Paul says the same method is to be followed by Christians in providing for the gospel ministry.**

"If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? . . . **Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple?** and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that **they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.**"—*1 Corinthians 9:11, 13-14.*

As illustrated by the man who grew corn, **the basis of the tithing system is the fact that God owns everything, and helps us in everything we do.**

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."—*Psalms 24:1.*

"The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, saith the Lord of hosts."—*Haggai 2:8.*

"For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are Mine . . . **Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High: And call upon Me in the day of trouble:** I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."—*Psalms 50:10-11, 14-15.*

**It is God who gives the physical and brain power so we can obtain wealth.**

"But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for

**it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth.”—Deuteronomy 8:18.**

**If you go to southern Italy to the site of the old city of Pompeii**—which was buried in ash in A.D. 79 by an immense eruption of Mount Vesuvius,—you will find a field museum established by archaeologists who excavated the ancient ruins. There you will see the petrified bodies of men and women who had been overtaken by the catastrophe that destroyed this ancient resort city beneath rock, lava, and red-hot ashes. **One is the body of a woman, who with both hands, still clutched her jewels.** It seems that after she had been warned of the impending doom of the city, she tarried to gather her pearls, rings, and ornaments,—and this slight delay resulted in her death.

**What is the wealth of the world compared to what God can do for those faithful to Him?**

**The “tithe” is one-tenth of our income. The Bible teaches that we are to pay this to God.** Here are some examples of this:

“For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the Most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; **to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all.**”—Hebrews 7:1-2.

**Jesus Himself told us that we should pay tithe.**

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: **these ought ye to have done,** and not to leave the other undone.”—Matthew 23:23.

**The Bible teaches that we rob God when we do not pay tithes and offerings.**

“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, **Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings.** Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation.”—Malachi 3:8.

**God promises to bless us if we will pay the tithe.**

“**Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse,** that there may be meat in Mine house, **and prove Me now herewith,** saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.”—Malachi 3:10-11.

#### **FREEWILL OFFERINGS**

In Malachi 3:8, just quoted, it is mentioned we rob God when we do not pay “tithes and offerings.”

So we have here another duty which God gives us in the Bible. He requires we give money to help eliminate the natural selfishness in our hearts,—and **He wants us to give these funds from hearts full of love and gratitude to Him** for all He is doing for us.

**“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart,** so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”—2 Corinthians 9:7.

“For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward.”—1 Corinthians 9:17.

**When a certain lake in Central Africa was discovered, it had no outlet** and the water was brackish and unfit for use. When Cameron and Stanley visited the lake later, it was beginning to dribble into the Lukaga River and thence into the Congo. **Shortly afterward, it burst the barrier and flowed out in a full stream,** which it has maintained ever since. **Within twenty years, the water in the lake became pure and wholesome.** Fish abound, providing food for many birds and those living near its shores.

**Giving is part of the true Christian’s way of life. He shares so others may also receive the blessings of the gospel.** Christ said this:

“Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, **It is more blessed to give than to receive.**”—Acts 20:35.

“‘For giving is living,’ the angel said, ‘Go feed to the hungry sweet charity’s bread.’ And must I keep giving again and again?’ My selfish and querulous answer ran. ‘Oh, no!’ said the angel, piercing me through, ‘Just give ’till the Master stops giving to you.’”

**“They shall not appear before the Lord empty: Every man shall give as he is able,** according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which He hath given thee.”—Deuteronomy 16:16-17.

“For **if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath,** and not according to that he hath not.”—2 Corinthians 8:12.

**It is so easy to become selfish and covetous, and live only to get for ourselves. Christ warned us to beware not to do this.**

“And He said unto them, **Take heed, and beware of covetousness:** for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”—Luke 12:15.

**To explain this, Christ then told the parable of the rich man who owned so much, but decided to just keep adding to his wealth,** and not help others. Regarding this, Christ said:

“But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: **then whose shall those things be,** which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”—Luke 12:20-21.

**A man contributed a sizeable sum of money to help build a church.** Later on, during a financial

crisis, he lost all his property. Someone asked him, "If you had the money you put into that church, you could start again." The good man replied, "That is the only money *I have saved*, after everything else was lost. **If I had not given it to the Lord, it would have gone with the rest. Now it will always be mine.**"

**Jesus encourages our hearts with these comforting words:**

"Seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather **seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.**

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

"Sell that ye have, and give alms; **provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not**, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. **For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.**"—*Luke 12:29-34.*

**A tribal chief, who had been converted from heathenism, was exceedingly fervent in his prayers and extremely generous** in his gifts to the missionary and his work. At length the missionary asked the chief why he was so devoted in his worship of God and so lavish in his gifts. The convert gave this answer: "Ah, you have never been in the darkness!"

#### **MY COMMITMENT**

In Thy great wisdom, Father, Thou didst know that I needed to keep giving so the eroding care and worry of selfishness could be removed from my heart. I rejoice that I can give my life and my all—and this includes whatever money Thou dost ask for—to Thy work.

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**COMING NEXT**—God is not only interested in our spiritual welfare, He wants to extend our earthly years so, with greater physical and mental strength, we can serve Him better.

# Importance of Healthful Living

*“Because We Are God’s Property*

**There is a monastery in the Near East that stands precariously atop a three-hundred-foot cliff.** Visitors are strapped in a huge wicker basket, and then pulled to the top with an old ragged rope.

As one visitor stepped into the basket for the descent, he asked anxiously, “How often do you get a new rope?” “Whenever the old one breaks,” a monk replied.

**Risky, dangerous living, skidding through life on a threadbare rope! Tired, ready to break! Getting by with the aid of too many cups of coffee, too many cigarettes.** Tense, parchment-faced individuals who cannot decide whether to take a Dexedrine tablet and go to a party, or take a seconal and go to bed!

**Too many people careen down the wild highway of modern life until their health is gone.** And then with their time and money they pay. Too late they discover that when the rope breaks, it cannot be replaced! *For the Creator only gave us one!*

## GOD’S PLAN TO KEEP US IN HEALTH

**When God created man, He looked upon His work and saw that it was “very good”** (*Genesis 1:31*). A tree of life was provided, able to perpetuate life (*Genesis 3:22-24*). Even when removed from access to this tree, Adam was so strong and vigorous that he lived to the age of 930 years.

It was never God’s intention that any person should ever get sick, languish in pain, or die.

**It was sin which brought sickness, suffering, and death.** The holy pair, Adam and Eve, chose to reject the authority of God and obey the words of the serpent, Satan.

The results were devastating and far reaching, costing man everything, and costing heaven its greatest gift—the Son of God. God has said,

“Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, **I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked;** but that the wicked turn from his way and live: **turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die,** O house of Israel?”—*Ezekiel 33:11*.

God “doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men” (*Lamentations 3:33*). **He wants us to remain in good health throughout our earthly life.**

“Beloved, **I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health,** even as thy soul prospereth.”—*3 John 2*.

**When we serve the living God, He strengthens our resolve to live carefully and healthfully.**

“And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and He shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee.”—*Exodus 23:25*.

**But the condition upon which we can receive this blessing is obedience to His moral and physical laws.**

“If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, **I will put none of these diseases upon thee,** which I have brought upon the Egyptians: **for I am the Lord that healeth thee.**”—*Exodus 15:26*.

**Sickness and infirmity is often the result of overeating or eating wrong food and drink, lack of proper exercise, intemperance, or other bad practices.**

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for **whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.**”—*Galatians 6:7*.

Our own violation of God’s moral and physical laws only increases our difficulties and hastens death.

**But in this life we are never fully freed from all the results of sin.** Sickness, suffering, and death are the common lot of all. God does not save us from the first death. “It is appointed unto men once to die” (*Hebrews 9:27*). The gospel does not save men from the first death, but from the second one (*Revelation 20:6, 14*);—the death that will bring eternal separation from God.

**Many of God’s faithful ones have lived amid great infirmity. But Christ promises to help them, and points them to a glorious tomorrow** in a better land. For this reason, the Apostle Paul, in the midst of his physical affliction, could tell us this:

“And He [Christ] said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for **My strength is made perfect in weakness.** Most gladly therefore . . . I take pleasure in infirmities.”—*2 Corinthians 12:9-10*.

**We should not seek after miracle healers to restore us to health.** John the Baptist did no miracles (*John 10:41*), and the Apostles only did a few. Jesus has warned us against false christs and false prophets who in the last days would do “great signs and wonders” (*Matthew 24:24*). At the end-time, devils will work miracles to deceive many (*Revelation 16:14*). Fire will be brought down from the skies to deceive men (*Revelation 13:13-14*).

Satan transforms himself into an angel of light (*2 Corinthians 11:14*), and so we can expect that his agents may sometimes appear to be good men and deceive many.

"Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."—2 *Corinthians 11:15*.

### **OBEDIENCE IS THE KEY TO HEALTH**

**Several visitors were being shown** through a state penitentiary. The guard led them from the assembly hall, to several cells, and then to the shop. There they saw a prisoner sewing on one of Uncle Sam's heavy canvass mail bags. In silence he sat working. As the group passed by, one asked him, "Sewing?" to which he answered grimly, "No, I'm reaping."

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."—*Galatians 6:7*.

Many people spend years sowing bad health habits, and later, too late, they reap pain and poor health. It is now that we must make the needed changes.

**God's remnant church, His special people in the last days, are clearly pictured in Revelation 12:17 and 14:12.**

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, **which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.**"—*Revelation 12:17*.

"Here are they **that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.**"—*Revelation 14:12*.

**This special last-day group have three special characteristics:** They keep the commandments of God. They keep the faith of Jesus. They have the testimony of Jesus. But miracles are not mentioned. **Faith that obeys God's law is the crucial issue.** Obedience to the Ten Commandments and all the words of God in Scripture must ever be the test for us.

"To the law and to the testimony: **if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.**"—*Isaiah 8:20*.

**It is always proper for one of God's children to pray for another.** We are told this in James 5:14-16.

"**The prayer of faith shall save the sick . . . pray one for another, that ye may be healed.** The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."—*James 5:15, 16*.

**Natural remedies should also be used.**

"**Those who seek healing by prayer should not neglect to make use of the remedial agencies within their reach.** It is not a denial of faith to use such remedies as God has provided to alleviate pain and to aid nature in her work of restoration. **It is no denial of faith to cooperate with God, and to place themselves in the condition most favorable to recovery.**

"God has put it in our power to obtain a knowl-

**edge of the laws of life.** This knowledge has been placed within our reach for use. We should employ every facility for the restoration of health, taking every advantage possible, working in harmony with natural laws. When we have prayed for the recovery of the sick, we can work with all the more energy, thanking God that we have the privilege of co-operating with Him, and asking His blessing on the means which He Himself has provided.

"**We have the sanction of the Word of God for the use of remedial agencies.** Hezekiah, king of Israel, was sick, and a prophet of God brought him the message that he should die. He cried unto the Lord, and the Lord heard His servant and sent him a message that fifteen years should be added to his life. Now, one word from God would have healed Hezekiah instantly; but special directions were given, 'Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaster upon the boil, and he shall recover.' *Isaiah 38:21.*"—*Ministry of Healing, pp. 231-232*.

"**When we have prayed for the recovery of the sick, whatever the outcome of the case, let us not lose faith in God.** If we are called upon to meet bereavement, let us accept the bitter cup, remembering that a Father's hand holds it to our lips. But should health be restored, it should not be forgotten that the recipient of healing mercy is placed under renewed obligation to the Creator."—*Ibid., p. 233*.

**We are required to care for our bodies, for it is God who made us, and we are His property.**

"What? **know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost** which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"—*1 Corinthians 6:19*.

**We are His, not only by creation, but by redemption.**

"**For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body,** and in your spirit, which are God's."—*Verse 20*.

**A young man complimented a wealthy man on the remarkable amount of real estate and possessions he had accumulated** over the years. In reply, the older man said, "I am not really to be envied. **How can my wealth help me?** I am 60 years old now, and I can't digest food. I have lived too fast, smoked, drank and didn't eat right. I would give you all my millions if you could give me your youth and health. I'd gladly sell all to have half my life over again!"

"**What would you do if you had it again,**" the young man asked. "**I would take care of my body** so I wouldn't get into this condition later on."

### **AVOID SUBSTANCES WHICH DESTROY**

**Those who do evil things, and knowingly ruin themselves by putting poisonous substances and liquids into their bodies, are destroying them-**

selves.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? **If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy;** for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. Let no man deceive himself."—*1 Corinthians 3:16-18*.

**Strong warnings are given in the Bible about drinking liquor, and similar harmful substances.**

"The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty." *Proverbs 23:21*.

"**Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink,** that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken."—*Habakkuk 2:15*. (See *1 Corinthians 5:11*; *Proverbs 23:29-32*.)

"**Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?** Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."—*1 Corinthians 6:9-10*. (See *Revelation 21:27*.)

**We should never use any kind of grape juice, except the unfermented kind.** No fermented wine or liquor of any kind should enter our bodies.

"The wine which Christ provided for the feast [in John 2], and that which He gave to the disciples as a symbol of His own blood, was **the pure juice of the grape**. To this the prophet Isaiah refers when he speaks of the new wine 'in the cluster,' and says, 'Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it.' *Isa. 65:8*.

"It was Christ who in the Old Testament gave the warning to Israel, '**Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.**' *Prov. 20:1*. And He Himself provided no such beverage."—*Desire of Ages, 149*.

**We must also beware of "fleshly lusts which war against the soul"** (*1 Peter 2:11*; also *Matthew 5:27-28*). When tempted, Joseph in Egypt said, "**How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?**" (*Genesis 39:9*).

Also significant are *Genesis 13:13* and *19:1-17*, which speak of a different type of sexual sin which God abhors.

**It was because of such great sins that God destroyed the world at the time of the Flood.**

"And God saw that **the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil** continually . . . And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth."—*Genesis 6:5, 7*.

"**Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.**"—*Matthew 5:8*.

"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."—*Mat-*

*thew 10:28*.

## RETURNING TO A SIMPLE DIET

**We should try to return to the simple diet which God gave us in the beginning, which consisted of fruits and vegetables.**

"And God said, Behold, **I have given you every herb bearing seed**, which is upon the face of all the earth, **and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed;** to you it shall be for meat [food]."—*Genesis 1:29*.

**It was not until after the Flood ended that, due to a lack of food, God permitted man to eat meat** (*Genesis 9:3*). But meat was not in the original diet.

The vision of Peter in *Acts 10:9-35* does not teach that it is all right to eat bad food. Later he explained the true meaning of the vision: "God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (*Acts 10:28*).

**In the first chapter of Daniel, we learn of three young men who determined to only eat a vegetarian diet.**

"But **Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself** with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank."—*Daniel 1:8*.

The king later found that, as a result of their dedication to God and careful diet, they were ten times wiser than the other magicians and astrologers in his realm (*Daniel 1:15, 18-20*).

**Both our minds and our bodies are affected by what we take into our bodies.** God does not want us to eat or drink anything which will only injure us!

"For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth. **Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing.**"—*Deuteronomy 14:2-3*.

**It is also important that we regularly obtain adequate rest.**

"And He [Christ] said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while."—*Mark 6:31*.

**Cleanliness is also important.** As it is often said, cleanliness is next to godliness. "Be ye clean" (*Isaiah 52:11*).

**Have peace of heart.** It is good for the body, the nerves, and the mind.

"**A merry heart doeth good like a medicine:** but a broken spirit drieth the bones."—*Proverbs 17:22*.

"**Godliness with contentment** is great gain."—*1 Timothy 6:6*.

"**Great peace have they which love Thy law:** and nothing shall offend them."—*Psalms 119:165*.

"There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked."—*Isaiah 48:22*.

**One day a man strolling along through the country happened to see a magnificent golden eagle flying upward toward the sky.** He watched it with delight and admiration as it strongly mounted upward. But presently he saw that something was wrong with it.

It seemed unable to go any higher. Soon it began to fall, and it lay at his feet a lifeless mass.

What could be the matter? No human hand had harmed it. No hunter's rifle had sounded, or could have reached it.

**Walking over, he examined the bird—and he discovered what had happened.** It had carried up with it a little weasel in its talons. As the eagle had drawn its talons close to its body for flight, the little creature, though badly wounded, had managed to sink in its jaws—and drink the lifeblood from the eagle's breast.

**How like this is sin! It may appear small at first.** It may seem like a lot of fun, even though it exhausts us afterward. Just a little thing, one glass of wine, but presently a habit has fastened itself upon the man or woman and, unforsaken, it ruins the life.

**So, in summary, we should flee wrongdoing and, instead, everything we do should glorify God.**

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, **do all to the glory of God.**"—*1 Corinthians 10:31*.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye **present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God**, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but **be ye transformed** by the renewing of your mind, **that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.**"—*Romans 12:1-2*.

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and **I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless** unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."—*1 Thessalonians 5:23*.

#### **MY COMMITMENT**

My body is Thine, oh, my Father. I give it to you. Teach me day by day, through Thy Word how I should order my days. Help me keep my conscience sensitive so I can hear Thy still small voice warning me to avoid the many nice-appearing paths which lead to destruction. In the name of my precious Lord and Saviour, I ask this. Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—We are God's sheep and He is our great Shepherd. The closer we can come to Him the better. Here is the Bible truth about entering the sheepfold.

# Entering the Sheepfold

Baptism and the Ordinances

After the *Titanic* went down, a young Scotchman rose in a meeting in Hamilton, Canada, and said, **"I am a survivor of the Titanic.** When I was drifting alone on a spar on that awful night, the tide brought John Harper, of Glasgow, also on a piece of wreckage, near me.

" 'Man,' Harper said, **'have you accepted Christ?'**

" 'No,' I said, 'I have not.' He replied, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ!' The waves bore him away. But, strange to say, they brought him back a little nearer.

"He said, 'Have you accepted Him now?' 'No,' I said, 'I can't honestly say I did.' He said again, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; He is waiting for your decision!' "

Shortly afterwards, he went down, and there, alone in the night, and with two miles of water under me, I believed. **I am John Harper's last convert."**

**The young man received Bible studies, accepted its testing truths, and was baptized. The angels sang for another sinner had come to Jesus Christ, our only Redeemer.**

"And when in heavenly glory, My ransomed soul shall be, From sin and all pollution, Forever set free; I'll cast my crown before Him, And loud His grace extol: Thou hast Thyself redeemed me; Thou alone hast saved my soul!"

## "EXCEPT A MAN BE BAPTIZED"

**Some years ago an American Indian visited the home of a minister on the great northwestern frontier of America.** He expressed his desire to study the Christian faith. The minister was happy to give him instruction, and lent him a Bible to read.

After several months, the Indian returned and requested baptism, for he had read about it in the Bible. Naturally the minister was happy at this response. **After questioning the Indian regarding his faith in Christ, the pastor went to his cabinet and prepared a little silver bowl** in which he placed a small amount of water.

**At this the Indian objected, "Not deep enough!"**

"Oh," replied the minister, "this is the custom of our church."

**"Then you gave Indian wrong book!"**

**That simple, significant answer ought to set**

**every one of us thinking.** For if we are to take seriously the direct statement of Jesus to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water, . . . he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;"—that is, if we are to accept this direct statement of Jesus, **we shall need to discover how, when, and under what circumstances we are to be baptized.**

## Baptism is a required ordinance.

When Jesus gave the great gospel commission to His church, He bade them:

**"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them** in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."—*Matthew 28:19.*

Mark's Gospel quotes Jesus as saying:

**"He that believeth** and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."—*Mark 16:16.*

**Surely such language as this would never have been used by Jesus in speaking of an ordinance that had little or no meaning, or that was not essential in the plan of redemption.**

True, the performance of baptism alone will not save an individual from his sins, but it serves as a symbol of a spiritual cleansing.

**The word, baptize, was familiar to the Apostles and early Christians. They understood it perfectly and knew what Jesus meant** when, at the close of His earthly work, He gave His last and great commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (*Mark 16:15*), "baptizing them" (*Matthew 28:19*).

## ONLY BY IMMERSION

**Bible baptism is only by immersion.** When John Wesley was in America in 1737, he was tried by a jury of thirty-four men in a church trial on the charge of "refusing to baptize Mr. Parker's child, except by dipping." It seems clear, therefore, that John Wesley, the father of Methodism, recognized baptism as immersion. The records of this trial are found in the court proceedings of Georgia.

**The only mode of baptism recognized and used in the New Testament is immersion.** The word *baptize* is simply a transliteration of the Greek word, *baptizo*, and is defined in lexicons as meaning "to dip, to immerse, to plunge." There are eight different words in the original Greek of the New Testament used to describe the application of liquids. Among these various words—meaning to sprinkle, to pour, to immerse—**only the one word meaning "to immerse" is used in describing baptism. There is "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism"** (*Ephesians 4:5*).

**This was the manner in which Jesus was baptized.** At that time John the Baptist was baptizing

converts in the Jordan River. Hundreds were flocking from Jerusalem, Judea, and all the region round about to be baptized by him. Here is the entire story of what happened:

**“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized** of him. But John forbad Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?

“And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for **thus it becometh us to fulfill** [give a perfect example of] **all righteousness**. Then he suffered Him.

“And Jesus, when He was baptized, **went up straightway out of the water**: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: And lo a Voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”—*Matthew 3:13-17*.

Several extremely important facts are revealed here: First, **Jesus was baptized in the river**, not in Jerusalem with someone sprinkling water, from a bowl, on Him.

Second, when He had been baptized, **He “went up straightway out of the water”** (*Matthew 3:16*). This clearly indicates that the method of administering this ordinance to Jesus was by immersion, since He had gone into the water to be baptized.

Third, as He looked upon the scene, **God the Father approved of what was done**, and spoke directly from His throne, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (*verse 17*).

It is significant that the Bible tells us that **John the Baptist only baptized where there was “much water,”** so a full immersion could occur.

“And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, **because there was much water there**: and they came, and were baptized.”—*John 3:23*.

**So Jesus, who is our example in all things, passed through the waters of baptism and was immersed, thereby illustrating His death, burial, and resurrection—which were soon to be experienced for man’s salvation.**

When we are baptized, we follow Jesus who is our example.

“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, **leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps**.”—*1 Peter 2:21*.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”—*Philippians 2:5*.

Just as it was sung in the old baptismal song:

“Thus through the emblematic grave, The glorious suffering Saviour trod; Thou art our Pattern, through the wave, We follow Thee, blest Son of God.”

**The same form of baptism was used by Philip the evangelist** when, under the guidance of the

Spirit of God, he led the Ethiopian eunuch to an acceptance of Jesus. Notice that the man asked questions about the Bible, which Philip carefully answered. Then the man asked for baptism. Philip then required from him a profession of faith, which he received: “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (*Acts 8:37*). After being convinced of the eunuch’s sincerity and faith, we are told:

“He commanded the chariot to stand still: and **they went down both into the water**, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

“And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.”—*Acts 8:38-39*.

When Saul of Tarsus was converted (and became Paul the Apostle), God told Ananias to find him. When he did, he told Saul that he should be baptized.

#### **FULFILLING THE MEANING OF BAPTISM**

**The actual cleansing from sin is, of course, accomplished by the blood of Christ.** This is the fountain that has been opened for sin and uncleanness. The sinner has redemption through His blood.

**“In whom we have redemption through His blood**, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”—*Ephesians 1:7*.

It is only through Christ that this can be done.

**“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”**—*Revelation 1:5*.

“These are they which came out of great tribulation, **and have washed their robes, and made them white** in the blood of the Lamb.”—*Revelation 7:14*.

**Prior to the death of Christ, a lamb was slain to symbolize this cleansing; but today we do it by passing through the waters of baptism.** Peter says it this way:

“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”—*1 Peter 3:21*.

**In Romans 6:3 we are told that when the repentant sinner is baptized, he is “baptized into Jesus Christ.”**

**But before one can be baptized, he must have faith, repentance, and a full acceptance of Jesus Christ as His personal Saviour.** Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (*Mark 16:16*). **The believing must precede the ordinance.** Otherwise baptism would be a dead form.

**Infant baptism, therefore, is not Scriptural.** Before this ordinance is given to a child, he should first be given time to grow up to the age of personal

responsibility. He should be carefully taught the Word of God and, if possible, led to a full acceptance of the gospel. The child should be old enough to fully recognize the fact of sin, His need of a personal saviour, and that Christ Jesus alone can accomplish his redemption.

**“He that cometh to God must believe** that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”—*Hebrews 11:6*.

**Sprinkling or pouring for baptism was not introduced into the church until hundreds of years** after the early Christian church passed off the stage of action. D.A. Stanley, of the Church of England, wrote:

“For the first thirteen centuries [after Christ] the almost universal practice of baptism was that of which we read in the New Testament, **and which is the very meaning of the word ‘baptize’**—that those who were baptized were plunged, submerged, immersed into the water.”—*Dr. Dean Arthur Stanley, Christian Institutions*, pp. 256-257.

**Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore** (1834-1921), the second man in America to be made a cardinal and the leading Catholic writer of the end of the nineteenth century, answered the question of who started the practice of sprinkling, dripping, and pouring—in place of full immersion—and why it was done:

“For several centuries after the establishment of Christianity, baptism was usually conferred by immersion. **But since the twelfth century the practice of baptizing by infusion** [pouring or sprinkling] has prevailed in the Catholic Church, **as this manner is attended with less inconvenience** than baptism by immersion.”—*James Cardinal Gibbons*.

**These unscriptural modes of baptism have no basis in the Bible.** They are among the errors that crept into the church during the period known as the Dark Ages, that resulted from the great apostasy foretold by the Apostle Paul.

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for **that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed**, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; **so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.**”—*2 Thessalonians 2:3-4*.

#### TAKING THE FOUR STEPS

**In the pathway which leads into the waters of baptism, step one is to believe.**

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”—*Acts 16:31*.

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see

life.”—*John 3:36*.

This belief, **this faith which ultimately can bring salvation, means that one looks upon Jesus as having died for his sins, and believes that Christ can enable him to resist sin and live a godly life.**

**The second step is repentance.** As the Holy Spirit points out sin and points to Jesus as our Saviour, conviction comes into the heart.

“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”—*Luke 13:3*.

“That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”—*Luke 24:47*.

“The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.”—*Acts 17:30*.

**Repentance means true sorrow for sin, putting away of evil, making every wrong right as far as in us lies.**

**The third step is confession of our faith in Christ.** We read:

“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”—*Romans 10:9*.

“Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven.”—*Matthew 10:32*.

**The fourth step is a public confession of this faith in baptism.** Unfortunately, many people disregard this last step entirely. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (*Mark 16:16*) is the plain statement of Jesus.

**The baptismal command is to be obeyed the same as all the other commands of Christ. Jesus made it very clear:**

**“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”**—*John 3:5*.

“He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him.”—*1 John 2:4-5*.

**The Apostle Paul wrote that we are “baptized into Christ”** (*Galatians 3:27*). That is a wonderful truth.

**Through the powerful preaching of the Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost, thousands were brought under conviction of sin.** The Word of God as preached that day led to repentance. They began to see their lives as God saw them, and they cried out, “What shall we do?” (*Acts 2:37*).

“Then Peter said unto them, **Repent, and be**

**baptized every one of you** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”—*Acts 2:38*.

This was a great day for the work of God in old Jerusalem. **Three thousand persons were baptized.** Notice the sequence here: the preaching of the Word; conviction (“They were pricked in their heart.” *Acts 2:37*.); repentance (“Repent, and be baptized.” *Verse 38*.); then baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**This was the story of the advancing gospel wherever it went.** As the early church grew, the believers preached the Word. Although often driven out by persecution, they “went everywhere preaching the Word” (*Acts 8:4*).

But the preaching, teaching, instructing—and the conviction—always preceded baptism and were always followed by it.

When Philip the evangelist went to Samaria, “preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God,” the people there, hearing the gospel, were convicted of their sins. And “when they believed . . . they were baptized, both men and women” (*Acts 8:12*). They did not wait, they did not argue, they did not hold back. They acted upon their belief.

#### **SYMBOLIZING THREE THINGS**

**Baptism symbolizes three important steps in our life:**

**First, as we go down into the waters and are covered, we die to sin.**

**Second, we are buried by faith into the death of Christ.**

**Third, as we come up out from under the water, we rise to newness of life, to a new life in Christ.**

**There is a complete passage of Scripture which explains this. Notice that the emphasis is on the putting away of sin,** not continuing to live in it. Putting away sin means to forsake one’s past sins and henceforth obey the commandments of God.

“What shall we say then? **Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.** How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

“**Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?** Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: **that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.**”

“**For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection:**

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, **that henceforth we should not serve sin.** For he that

is dead is freed from sin.

“**Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him:** Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God.

“Likewise **reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin,** but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it** in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”—*Romans 6:1-13*.

**So baptism commemorates—that is, it is a memorial of—Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection.** This is what the Scriptures teach us in Romans 6. **Sunday is not the Biblical memorial of Christ’s resurrection; baptism is!**

**It is only the mighty creative power of God that regenerates, that gives new life to His children.** No human effort or resolutions can do it. It is possible only to those who are born again, not by the will of man, but “by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever” (*1 Peter 1:23*). **For we are—**

“**. . . buried with Him in baptism,** wherein **also ye are risen with Him** through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead.”—*Colossians 2:12*.

It is this same mighty power of God which will raise us from the grave, if we fall asleep in Jesus before His Second Coming.

**So baptism also represents our hope in Christ for the future.** If we die in this world, we shall be raised again at His second coming, and “so shall we ever be with the Lord” (*1 Thessalonians 4:17*).

But just now, while we wait for that glorious event, we live our lives in Christ, seeking always those better things which He daily has for us.

“**If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above,** where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.”—*Colossians 3:1*.

#### **FOUR THINGS BAPTISM DOES NOT DO**

**It should be briefly mentioned that there are four things that baptism does not do:**

**First, baptism itself does not change the heart of man.** It is only a symbol of the change. A man may be baptized without faith, repentance, or a new heart. He might be immersed and still come up a sinner. He would simply come up a wet sinner.

**Second, baptism does not make a person feel better.** It does not change his feelings. **Salvation is not a matter of feeling, but obedience.**

**Third, baptism does not remove temptation.**

The devil is not through with a person who is baptized. But Jesus is the helper of every believer. He says, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (*Hebrews 13:5*). God promises that no temptation will come without a way of escape (*1 Corinthians 10:13*).

**Fourth, baptism does not guarantee salvation.** It is not a magical rite. It is not the end but the beginning of what, if we are faithful to the end, can be a wonderful journey with Jesus through life.

**True baptism is a symbol that cancels the past and brings one into the family of God.** Then, to please the Father, one must live as a child of God ought to live.

"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."—*Acts 22:16*.

**In the church of a little town in Illinois, there was to be a public debate on the subject of baptism.** A large crowd gathered. The minister who was to deny the need of Bible baptism appeared. For some reason, however, the one who was to defend it was kept away.

So one of the church elders was approached and told that he would have to defend baptism the way the Bible teaches it. Shocked, the old gentleman said he had never made a public speech in his life and did not know he could do this.

Almost pushed onto the platform, he was told he would have to make the first speech, to be followed by that minister, known to be a powerful speaker.

**Slowly the old man took out his spectacles, opened his Bible to Acts 2:38-39 and read it slowly. Then he turned to Romans 6:1-13 and read that. Then he turned to Mark 16:16 and read that. Then he sat down.**

Then the man opposed to Bible baptism arose and, for nearly an hour he used all his oratorical ability to convince the people that the Bible did not mean what it said.

After this, the old elder arose a second time, slowly made his way to the pulpit, slowly put his spectacles on, again located Romans 6, smoothed out the page, brought it nearer to the light, and looked at the text carefully. **Then, holding up his Bible, he said, "Well, brethren, it's still there."**

**—And it is still there.** The teaching of Jesus and the Apostles on baptism is still there, still in the holy Book, still there for us to obey, still there to bring joy and blessing to the obedient.

"O now I see the crimson wave, The fountain deep and wide; Jesus, my Lord, mighty to save, Points to His wounded side.

"I rise to walk in heaven's own light, Above the world and sin; With heart made pure and garments

white, And Christ enthroned within."

## THE ORDINANCE OF HUMILITY

**Visiting a big sheep ranch in the Northwest, a man was riding along a ridge, flanking a canyon, with the rancher.** Suddenly, three sheep appeared from among the boulders. They stood for a moment with heads up, eyes frightened, one front foot up, poised to run, then they crashed through the canyon and were gone.

Voicing his surprise, the visitor asked why there were wild sheep on this ranch.

The rancher replied, "Those are the sheep that my herder failed to count when he brought the rest into the fold three evenings ago." Three thousand gentle sheep grazed in the valley below us. **But only three nights had made this difference!**

In Jesus' parable, it is suggested that the shepherd felt deeply the loss of his sheep or feared what the wolves might do to them. **But his distress was also caused by fear of what would happen within the sheep, themselves.**

We need often to study our Bibles, pray to God, and partake of the communion service—so that we can remain close to our Lord and Saviour, the great Shepherd of the sheep.

**It was Jesus' last evening with His chosen disciples.** Unknown to eleven of the disciples, before morning their beloved Master would be in the hands of an infuriated mob. Only Judas had an idea of what was soon to occur.

**Aware of all that was before Him, Jesus chose this evening to introduce to His disciples the two new ordinances (other than baptism) which were to be recognized and observed in His new church.** These ordinances are a part of many Christian churches all over the world today.

In a few short hours, Christ's death would bring the ceremonies of the sacrificial system to an end. The post-crucifixion ordinances had to be established in the church before His death.

**The new ordinances would include the breaking and eating of unleavened bread as an emblem of Christ's broken body and the drinking of sweet grape juice as an emblem of His blood that was to be shed for sinners.**

**But there was also another ordinance that Jesus gave us that evening.**

**By Christ's own command, the Lord's Supper must be preceded by a ceremony of washing with water, typifying the cleansing away of sin** by the blood of Jesus. This washing ceremony was to be observed in addition to the ordinance of baptism.

**Baptism was generally to occur only once**

(at conversion) to the individual believer. **But this second washing was to be done, from time to time**, as the church should meet to partake of the emblems of the bread and the unfermented wine at the Lord's table.

**Baptism represented the big, initial cleansing**—when the blood of Christ covered and cleansed away all the past guilt of a sinful life.

**But this additional ceremony would symbolize the lesser, follow-up cleansings.** Also important, they would symbolize the cleansing of the followers of Christ from the sin and defilement which would accumulate in the life from day to day, following the ordinance of baptism.

**We find a clear record of this ordinance, often called “the ordinance of humility,” in John's Gospel.**

“Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him.

“Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God; **He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded.**”—*John 13:1-5*.

**This was the usual work of a servant, but none of the disciples were willing to do it.** Then Jesus arose—and started to wash everyone's feet. Traveling with open sandals on their bare feet over the dusty paths, they had accumulated a certain amount of dust on their feet; and it was customary for a servant to wash it off, but none of the disciples would lower himself to perform this task. They had forgotten Christ's earlier lesson, “He that is greatest among you shall be your servant” (*Matthew 23:11*).

**Christ recognized that, with the pride and selfishness in their hearts, the disciples were not prepared to partake of the Lord's Supper which Jesus was about to institute.** There was need of deep heart-searching on their part, for later we are told:

**“Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.**

**“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.**

**“For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.”—1 Corinthians 11:27-29.**

With all this in mind, Jesus arose and began washing the feet of the disciples, one by one, as they sat around the table. **He had taken upon Himself “the form of a servant” (*Philippians 2:7*) and was revealing His greatness through His great humility.**

When Christ came to Peter, the disciple was shocked and did not want it done to Him—for he felt humiliated that he, himself, had not earlier offered to do it; and now his Master was going to wash his feet!

To Peter's comment, Christ replied:

“What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter . . . **If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.**”—*John 13:7-8*.

This revealed the fact that **there was in this ordinance a hidden meaning**, which was not immediately obvious. **It was not the dust of the road which could forever separate Peter from Christ, but a rejection of the cleansing away of all defilement and sin**—which was symbolized by this service.

This ordinance was started in the church to clarify that **only the blood of Christ can keep His followers clean—when they continually return to Him in repentance** and renewal of the vows of loyalty and obedience to His requirements.

**Then, three times in a row, Christ definitely stated—commanded—that this ordinance of foot-washing (also called an ordinance of humility) was to be done thereafter by His disciples.** The command was given three times in six verses. Here they are:

“So after He had washed their feet, and had taken His garments, and was set down again, He said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

“Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; **ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.**

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. **If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.**”—*John 13:12-17*.

#### THE LORD'S SUPPER

**As soon as that service was completed, and Jesus had once again seated Himself and commanded that it be done;—He then instituted the Lord's Supper.**

“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, **Take, eat; this is My body.**

“And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, **Drink ye all of it; for this is My**

**blood** of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”—*Matthew 26:26-28*.

Within a few short hours, Jesus would be reviled, persecuted, and slain. His body was to be broken by the nails and the spear. His blood was to be spilled upon the ground. All this was to be endured, not because of any cause for death in Him, but for the remission of the sins of others. By His stripes, they were to find healing. By His death, life was to be made available to them.

By placing this ordinance of the bread and unfermented wine in the church, **from time to time as he partook of the Lord's Supper, each follower would have a vivid reminder of the agony and woe that Jesus passed through** on their behalf at Calvary in order to provide an atonement for their sins.

**The breaking of the bread would symbolize the piercing of His hands, feet, and side**, as He suffered death at the hands of His enemies.

**The drinking of the grape juice would symbolize the flowing forth of His blood** from His broken body, as it was shed for the remission of sins.

**This was unfermented wine; that is, grape juice.** The original word in the Greek means unfermented grape juice. **We are never to drink alcoholic beverages!**

“The wine which Christ . . . gave to the disciples as a symbol of His own blood, was the pure juice of the grape. To this the prophet Isaiah refers when he speaks of the new wine ‘in the cluster,’ and says, ‘Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it.’ Isa. 65:8. It was Christ who in the Old Testament gave the warning to Israel, ‘Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.’ Prov. 20:1. And He Himself provided no such beverage.”—*Desire of Ages*, 149.

“The . . . wine, untouched by fermentation, is on the table. These emblems Christ employs to represent His own unblemished sacrifice. Nothing corrupted by fermentation, the symbol of sin and death, could represent the ‘Lamb without blemish and without spot.’ 1 Peter 1:19.”—*Desire of Ages*, 653.

**The Apostle Paul describes the service in this way:**

“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: And **when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me.**

“After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, **This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.**

“**For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He**

**come.**”—*1 Corinthians 11:23-26*.

**Christ said, “This do in remembrance of Me.”** Partaking of these emblems (symbols), these new ordinances were to remain in the church until He should return the second time (“till He come”).

Only those who wholly reject what God has provided for their redemption—dare to lightly regard these sacred ordinances, given by Christ to His followers.

Concerning the bread and wine, Jesus said, “This do ye.” **“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come.”**

Concerning the ordinance of humility and cleansing, Jesus said, “Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; **ye also ought to wash one another's feet.** For I have given you an example, **that ye should do as I have done to you . . . if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.**”

**It is left to the church to decide how often these ordinances should be held, but they should not be infrequent.**

How very thankful we are for everything Christ has done for us, and continues to do! How much we want to please Him in every way. **By partaking of these ordinances, we draw closer to Him—and that is the purpose for which they were given.**

“Thy broken body, gracious Lord, Is shadowed by this broken bread; The wine which in this cup is poured, Points to the blood which Thou has shed.

“And while we meet together thus, We show that we are one in Thee; Thy precious blood was shed for us; Thy death, O Lord, has set us free.

“We have one hope, that Thou wilt come; Thee in the air we wait to see; Then Thou wilt give Thy saints a home, And we shall ever reign with Thee.”

“But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” “And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”—*1 John 1:7, 3*.

**Would you be willing to die if you could live again as a new person**, freed from the mental torture of your past? That would be wonderful if it could happen. —And it can happen to you! It has happened to millions! You must die and be born again. God can lift the burden of sin from your sagging shoulders, make you His own child, and strengthen you, day by day, to live a new life with Him. True, immersion baptism is a symbol of that new life in Christ.

**People passing a large billboard** in a great city

were surprised at its message: *“Born once to die twice —or born twice to die once!”*

Many live only for themselves and will experience both the first and second death. But some yield their lives to Christ, experience the new birth, and will inherit eternal life.

#### **MY COMMITMENT**

Thank you, kind Father, for giving us baptism so we could publicly show our acceptance of Thee; and these two special ordinances, so we could return anew to Thee in heartfelt repentance. Soon, at the Second Advent, we will be with Thee forever, but until then we must partake of these ordinances, and share these truths with others. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—God is deeply interested in our homes and families. He well knows that marriage is one of the most important decisions of life, and that raising children properly is of the highest importance. In the next chapter, we will learn what the Bible says about these things.

# Taking Your Home to Heaven

## God's Plan for Marriage and Child Raising

**A farmer in North Carolina once drove with two high-spirited horses into town.** Stopping in front of one of the stores he was about to enter, his horses took fright. Springing in front of them, he seized the reins to stop them, but was dragged some distance. When villagers got them stopped, they asked him why he, now so badly injured, tried to stop the team, **"Why were you willing to sacrifice yourself just for two horses and a wagon?"**

Limping badly, he led them around to the back of the wagon. There, asleep on a pallet of straw, lay his little boy.

"Herein is love." **The man was willing to lay down his life for his child!** So deep was his love for him.

**Except for the love of Christ for us, there are few affections as deep as those which exist within a godly marriage; as those which parents and children may have for one another.**

### GOD'S PLAN FOR MARRIAGE

"Dearly beloved, we are assembled here in the sight of God and in the presence of this company to join together this man and this woman in the sacred estate of matrimony."

**Thus opens the marriage ceremony** with words that have been spoken before countless couples for many generations. And, wherever and whenever they have been said, they have deeply impressed men and women that the loving heart of our heavenly Father has withheld from us no good thing.

It is a sacred moment when two people who were once strangers to each other are drawn together by an irresistible attraction, so that their souls cannot be henceforth divided by space or time. When a man sees in one woman that dream of purity and sweetness that has ever haunted his soul, or when in one man a woman finds the love and satisfaction that her heart has been unconsciously seeking, they can know that if they would base their marriage on love and obedience to the Word of God, their home will have lasting happiness.

**Wedding bells ring, but when the bells fade away, reality has come.** And reality is not always like the dream. For a home needs more than a carpenter's blueprint to enable it to weather every storm with a love and commitment which continually deepens.

"Home is where the heart is, In dwellings great or small; And a home lighted by love Is the dearest home of all."

### Marriage is in accordance with God's plan.

"And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an helpmeet for him."—*Genesis 2:18*.

The original Hebrew for "*helpmeet*" consists of two words, and means "someone who can help him." Man's companion was to correspond to him; each was to be a helper to the other.

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."—*Genesis 2:24*.

"Home is the father's kingdom, the mother's world, and the children's paradise."

"Home is a world of strife shut out, and a world of love shut in."

### Christ recognized and approved of marriage.

His first miracle was performed at a wedding (*John 2:1-11*). Later He said this:

"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."—*Matthew 19:6*.

**In the beginning, God gave marriage to mankind.** Marriage and the Sabbath are the only two institutions which come down to us from before the fall of man. It was ordained, not only for the purpose of perpetuating the race, but also to promote social order and human happiness. It was given to prevent irregular affection and, through godly families, to keep passing God's truths from generation to generation. Around it clusters all the purest and truest joys of home and the race.

(Marriage is also frequently used in Scripture as a symbol of the close relationship between God and His people. *Romans 7:1-4*; *2 Corinthians 11:2*; *Hosea 2:19-20*; *Revelation 19:7*. These passages explain this in greater detail.)

**When the divine origin of marriage is recognized, and the divine principles controlling it are obeyed, marriage is indeed a wonderful blessing. But when they are not followed, misery and evil are sure to follow.**

**God guards the marriage relation by commanding us to not engage in adultery.** Outside of marriage, there should be no sexual activity of any kind. Two of the Ten Commandments mention this prohibition:

*The Seventh:* "Thou shalt not commit adultery."—*Exodus 20:14*.

*The Tenth:* "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife."—*Exodus 20:17*.

**Because of adultery and polygamy, God destroyed the earth at the time of the Flood.**

"And it came to pass, when men began to multiply

on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.”—*Genesis 6:1-2*.

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually . . . and the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth.”—*Genesis 6:5, 7*.

“**Marriage is honourable** in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”—*Hebrews 13:4*.

### **God commands His people not to marry unbelievers.**

“**Neither shalt thou make marriages with them;** thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. **For they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods:** so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.”—*Deuteronomy 7:3-4*.

**The Bible forbids all compromising partnerships.** Marriage to someone who is not a sincere, earnest Christian will always be a cause of serious problems.

“**Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers:** for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or **what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?** And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”—*2 Corinthians 6:14-16*.

“**Give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons,** nor seek their peace or their wealth forever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land.”—*Ezra 9:12 (also Exodus 34:14-16; Judges 14:1-3; Ezra 9-10; Nehemiah 13:23-27)*.

**Solomon married heathen wives who gradually led him away from the worship of the true God.**

“**His wives turned away his heart after other gods.**”—*1 Kings 11:4*.

No Christian can marry an unbeliever without running serious risk, for he is placing himself on the enemy's ground.

**According to the Bible, the marriage contract is supposed to be for life.**

“For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; **but if the husband be dead, she is loosed** from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free

from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.”—*Romans 7:2-3*.

“The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but **if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will;** only in the Lord.”—*1 Corinthians 7:39*.

“And I say unto you, **Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery:** and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”—*Matthew 19:9 (also verses 3-5)*.

Because the Scriptures do not advocate separation after the union has been formed (*1 Corinthians 7:11-16*), it is obvious that **both parties should, individually, love God deeply before marriage is entered into. Both should already be praying to Him, studying the Bible regularly and seeking to obey what it teaches.** Only in this way can Christian faith be best maintained, and domestic happiness best ensured when the marriage begins. **It is extremely important that all contemplating marriage follow this principle,** or sadness and misery may later follow. Pastors and parents should warn the young against the dangers of improper marriages.

**An old Scottish woman lay dying.** Her husband, with sorrowful heart, sat holding her hand and, finally breaking through a lifetime of quiet reserve, said tenderly, “Janet, if ever a woman was loved, I love you.”

A smile lit up the face of the dying woman as she replied, “I aye kenned it, John; but, oh, to hear you say it!”

He had waited till she was nearly dead before telling her he loved her!

“Love is not passion, love is not pride, Love is a journeying side by side. Not of the breezes, nor of the gale; Love is the steady set of the sail.

“Deeper than ecstasy, sweeter than light, Born in the sunshine, born in the night. Flaming in victory, strongest in loss, Love is a sacrament made for a cross.”

**The husband, the leader in the home, should love and cherish his wife. The wife, in turn, should respect and honor her husband.** That is the formula for a wonderful marriage! **If the husband truly loves his wife, and she truly respects him,** all will be well.

“Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.”—*1 Corinthians 7:3*.

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.”—*Colossians 3:18-19*.

**Here is a passage of Scripture with much**

**instruction:**

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; **Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.**

**"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands,** as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and He is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

**"Husbands, love your wives,** even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it . . . So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it."—*Ephesians 5:20-25, 28-29.*

**Other Scripture passages tell us the same thing.**

"Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which He hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun."—*Ecclesiastes 9:9. (Regarding intimate relations between the husband and wife, read 1 Corinthians 7:1-5.)*

"For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands . . . Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."—*1 Peter 3:5, 7.*

**Both the husband and the wife should treat each other with unfailing respect, love, and courtesy.** When this is done, the home is a little heaven, in which to go to heaven. But, tragically, this is not always done.

"We have careful thought for the stranger and smiles for the sometimes guest. But oft for our own, The bitter tone, Though we love our own the best."

When you say to your children, "How much do you love me?" They will usually respond with a hug and a kiss. But if you put the same question to our heavenly Father, the answer is—the cross. We can glimpse the sufferings of Christ in the garden and on Calvary; but who can picture the sorrows of the Father in that last hour? **May we, in our homes, try to emulate Christ's patient, self-sacrificing spirit, who lived to ever encourage and help others.**

"If I had known in the morning, How wearily all the day, The words unkind would trouble my mind That I said when I went away.

"I had been more careful, darling, Nor given you needless pain, But we vex our own with look and tone, That we might never take back again.

"For how many go forth in the morning, That never come home at night! And hearts have broken for harsh words spoken, That sorrow can never make right.

"We have careful thoughts for the stranger, Sweet smiles for the sometime guest, But for our own, the bitter tone, though we love our own the best."

**What if the husband, for example, is an unbeliever? What can the wife do?**

"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation [conduct] of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear."—*1 Peter 3:1-2. (The original Greek of the word, translated here as "conversation," means "conduct," which includes attitude, words, and actions.)*

**There was a wife who was always kind and tender to her husband,** who, in return, often spoke sharp, unkind words. One day he asked her, "Why are you so nice to me when I'm often mean to you?" She replied, "Dear, I love Jesus and I am going to heaven, but this is the only heaven you are going to have. So I want to make it as pleasant for you as I can." Thinking of these words, and her continuing conduct of kindness, he eventually accepted Christ and became a firm Christian.

**Both the husband and wife should each maintain important duties in caring for the needs of the home.**

"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."—*1 Timothy 5:8.*

"Who can find a virtuous woman? **for her price is far above rubies.** The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil."—*Proverbs 31:10-11. (Read Proverbs 31:10-31).*

**"She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.** Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her . . . Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates."—*Proverbs 31:27-28, 30-31.*

**When both husband and wife cooperate in filling the home with happiness, everything goes well.**

"It isn't the chairs and the books and things, Or the pictures that hang on the walls; And it isn't the bird, although gaily he sings, It's the laughter that rings in the halls; It's the smile on the face of the mother at night. And the joy in the little one's eyes. And our love for each other with all its delight. That makes up the home that we prize."

Because we are told to thank God for all His blessings; this would include the family thanking Him at the beginning of each meal.

"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."—*1 Thessalonians 5:18*.

"Blessed are the married ones who trust to love and prayer, rather than to arguments."

#### **GOD'S PLAN FOR RAISING CHILDREN**

##### **Parents should love and train their children.**

They should plead with God in prayer that He will show them how to best instruct their children and prepare them for adulthood—and heaven beyond.

"Teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born."—*Judges 13:8*.

##### **Parents who have trained their children well will be rewarded later.**

"**Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.**"—*Proverbs 22:6*.

Solomon said that his father trained him well.

"**I was my father's son . . . He taught me also,** and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments and live."—*Proverbs 4:3-4*.

"She [the mother] openeth her mouth with wisdom; and **in her tongue is the law of kindness.**"—*Proverbs 31:26*.

##### **The first work of parents is to lead their children to reverence and love God and His Inspired Writings.**

"**Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.**"—*Psalms 34:11*.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do His commandments: His praise endureth forever."—*Psalms 111:10*.

"**And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.**"—*Isaiah 54:13*.

**In the family of Andrew Murray** of South Africa (pastor and author of a number of books on godly living), eleven children grew to adult life. As a result of the influence in that home, five of the sons became ministers and four of the daughters became ministers' wives. Ten of Murray's grandsons became ministers and thirteen became missionaries.

##### **It is urgent that the parents and children study God's Inspired Writings, both together and alone, so they can prepare for heaven.**

**The home is the child's first school, and it is here that the foundation should be laid** for a life of service. Its principles should be taught, not merely in theory, but to in order to shape the whole life.

"Now these are the commandments . . . which the Lord your God commanded to teach you, that ye

might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: **that thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged.** Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily . . . And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: **And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children,** and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."—*Deuteronomy 6:1-3, 5-7*.

##### **Here was part of the secret of Abraham's success in life:**

"Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him . . . **For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord,** to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of Him."—*Genesis 18:18-19*.

##### **Wherever Abraham moved, he always had family worship.**

"And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: **and there he builded an altar unto the Lord,** and called upon the name of the Lord."—*Genesis 12:8*.

This was part of the reason why God promised Abraham that his offspring would inherit the land (*verse 7*).

"That home shall be preserved and never shall decay. Where the Creator God is worshiped day by day."

**Proper discipline is also needed;** for children who are allowed to grow up with the will undisciplined and passions uncontrolled will generally in their adult years pursue a course which God condemns.

"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but **a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.**"—*Proverbs 29:15*.

"**Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest;** yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul."—*Proverbs 29:17*.

Let us quote an important verse again:

"**Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.**"—*Proverbs 22:6*.

We are told that God disciplines us, and that He does it because He loves us and wants us to develop good characters. This is an example of how

we should train our children.

“For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?”—*Hebrews 12:6-7*.

**But correction should never be given in anger,** for anger in the parent stirs up anger in the child. It is well to pray with a child before correcting him. Frequently mild but faithful instruction and prayer are all the training necessary.

“**Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath:** but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”—*Ephesians 6:4*.

“Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.”—*Colossians 3:21*.

**However, where there is stubbornness or willful disobedience,** the correction, whatever it may be, should be persisted in until the child yields submissively to the will and wishes of the parent.

“Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.”—*Proverbs 22:15*.

“Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.”—*Proverbs 23:13*.

“He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.”—*Proverbs 13:24*.

It is best, generally, that correction should be done in private, as this tends to preserve the self-respect of the child, a very important element in character building.

**No correction or training should be violent or abusive,** or given for the purpose of breaking the will of the child, but rather to direct the will, bring it into proper subjection, so the child can come to a realizing sense of what is right and what he should be doing.

“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: **nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness** unto them which are exercised thereby.”—*Hebrews 12:11*.

**The Bible also tells us of individuals who failed to train their children properly**—and the terrible results which followed.

“In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because **his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.**”—*1 Samuel 3:12-13*.

Here is a question that every parent, who is un-

decided about whether to discipline his children, should consider:

**“Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?”**—*Jeremiah 13:20*.

Happy are those parents who can say:

**“Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me.”**—*Isaiah 8:18*.

**Children should honor, respect, and obey their parents.** This is the message of the Fifth Commandment.

**Learning to honor, respect, and obey his earthly parents is the child's first and most important lesson in learning to honor and obey God.** The Fifth Commandment is about our attitude toward our earthly parents, but it also includes God, our heavenly Father; for in honoring them, we honor Him. To the child too young to know God quite as well, the earthly parent takes His place.

The Apostle Paul, referring to the Fifth Commandment, also mentions the importance of honoring parents.

**“Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise,** that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.”—*Ephesians 6:2-3*.

**“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.** Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.”—*Ephesians 6:1-3*.

“Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.”—*Colossians 3:20*.

**Jesus in His youth provided us with an example of doing this:**

“And He [Jesus] went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them.”—*Luke 2:51*.

**As long as parents live, they should be honored and respected by their children.**

“Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.”—*Proverbs 23:22*.

A young girl left Northfield Bible Training School with a desire to do a beautiful piece of service. Upon reaching home, she asked her pastor for the name of a lonely person to whom she could bring cheer and happiness. The next day the minister handed her a folded slip. When she opened it, she found written there the name of her widowed father.

**Children reveal their inner character by their words and actions.**

**“Even a child is known by his doings,** whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.”—*Proverbs 20:11*.

“Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and

foolish king, who will no more be admonished.”—*Ecclesiastes 4:13*.

**In six godly homes in Scotland, the parents trained their children for a life of service to God and man.** From those homes with their family altars there went forth six great pioneer missionaries: Robert Moffat, David Livingstone, and Alexander MacKay—all to Africa; Ion Keith-Falconer to Arabia; John G. Paton to the New Hebrides; and James Chalmers to New Guinea. **Christian homes ought to be nurseries for the ministry and the mission fields.**

**David is an example of one who sought to know God while still a child.**

“O God, Thou hast taught me from my youth.”—*Psalms 71:17*.

**Timothy grew up to be a solid Christian because of the careful instruction given him in his youth** by his mother and grandmother.

“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. And that **from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation** through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”—*2 Timothy 3:14-15*.

“When I call to remembrance **the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice;** and I am persuaded that in thee also.”—*2 Timothy 1:5*.

**Timothy was urged by Paul to provide a good example to others** of what a godly Christian was like.

“**Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers,** in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine . . . Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: **for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.**”—*1 Timothy 4:12-13, 15-16*.

**Unfortunately, some children continue to be disobedient to parents.** One of the signs of the last days will be children who are “disobedient to parents.”

“This know also, that **in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be** lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, **disobedient to parents,** unthankful, unholy.”—*2 Timothy 3:1-2*.

**God disapproves of children whose actions dishonor their parents.**

“A fool despiseth his father’s instruction: but **he that regardeth reproof is prudent.**”—*Proverbs 15:5*.

**“Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son:** but he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father.”—*Proverbs 28:7*.

“Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression; the same is the companion of a destroyer.”—*Proverbs 28:24*.

“There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother.”—*Proverbs 30:11*.

**God will eventually punish those who continue to be unkind to their parents.**

**“Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out** in obscure darkness.”—*Proverbs 20:20*

“The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.”—*Proverbs 30:17*.

**A godly father in the home is extremely important,** for he provides the continual help and encouragement that the mother needs in order to train the little ones for heaven. Here are several statements about Christian mothers:

John Quincy Adams said: **“All that I am my mother made me.”** Abraham Lincoln said: “All that I am or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother.” Dwight L. Moody declared: “All that I have ever accomplished in life, I owe to my mother.” Napoleon was a sage when he said: **“Let France have good mothers, and she will have good sons.”**

“Mightier and stronger than the power which, Man from his throne has hurled, Is the hand that rocks the cradle, ‘Tis the hand that rules the world.”

**A couple were about to celebrate their golden wedding anniversary,** and a local newspaper sent out a reporter for an interview. The husband was at home.

“What is your recipe for a long and happy marriage?”

“Well, I’ll tell you, young fellow,” the old man said slowly. I grew up an orphan and Sarah was the first one I ever kept company with. After the wedding, her dad took me aside and handed me a little package.

“Young man, here is all you need to know.” Reaching for a large gold watch in his pocket, the old man opened it and handed it to the reporter.

There across the face of the watch, where he could see it a dozen times a day, were written these words:

*“Say something nice to Sarah.”*

#### MY COMMITMENT

Gracious Father in heaven, help me to bring all the godly happiness I can into the life of my earthly companion. I want to fulfill Thy plan for our marriage, as fully as I can. In Christ’s name, I ask it.

Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—We now come to Part Eight in this series of studies. In the next chapter we are going to open our Bibles to a special chapter in the book of Revelation—that helps explain the problems confronting us today.

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— PART EIGHT —

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ENTERING FINAL EVENTS

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A Complete Evangelistic Sermon: Chapter Thirty-Seven

# Wilderness Survival

*The Church in the Dark Ages*

Some years ago a man found a Spanish coin in Florida. It bore the date 1796 and the Latin words **Plus Ultra**. There was a time when the motto on the coins of Spain bore one more word: *Ne Plus Ultra*. Why was it changed?

In those early days, Spain controlled both sides of the Straits of Gibraltar; and the two rocky points, one on the African shore and the other on the European shore, were called the Pillars of Hercules. At that time, Spanish coins were stamped with an image of those two great outposts which were, at that time, the last-known habitable parts of the earth toward the west.

On the scroll over the Pillars of Hercules appeared the words, **Ne Plus Ultra**—“No More Beyond.” But, when Columbus sailed into the western horizon and discovered the New World, everything was changed. Spain became a mighty empire with lands beyond the sea—the mines of Peru and Mexico, and the sun-drenched hills of California.

Then the motto on the coins was changed to **Plus Ultra**—“More Beyond.”

All through the Dark Ages, men and women were persecuted for their faith and went to their deaths, trusting that, because of Calvary, Christ would later restore them to life. **Plus Ultra was the glorious future on which the martyrs of old who died based their hopes.**

In Revelation, chapter 12, God tells us more about the sufferings of those faithful Christians who lived in the Dark Ages.

In the book of Revelation, the curtain of the ages is drawn aside—and onto the stage called history steps the father of lies, Satan. He who rebelled against God is unmasked.

In the twelfth chapter of Revelation, Satan appears in his true role: the archenemy of Jesus and His church. The Apostle John vividly introduces those involved in the struggle between light and darkness:

“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under

her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And **she being with child cried, travailing in birth,** and pained to be delivered.

“And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a **great red dragon**, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

“And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and **the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child** as soon as it was born.

“**And she brought forth a man child**, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: **and her child was caught up unto God**, and to His throne.”—*Revelation 12:1-5.*

## THE WOMAN AND HER CHILD

The figure of a pure woman is used in Scripture to symbolize the pure church (*Jeremiah 6:2; 2 Corinthians 11:2*), while a corrupt woman symbolizes the apostate church. (See *Revelation 17:3-4; Ezekiel 23:2-4*.)

It was the prophet Jeremiah who said, “I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman” (*Jeremiah 6:2*); and God, speaking through Isaiah, says of Zion, “Thou art My people” (*Isaiah 51:16*). **Her beauty represents the glory of the church; her pure life, its purity**—or what the Scripture speaks of as “the righteousness of saints” (*Revelation 19:8*).

Again and again the symbol is used in Scripture. **The church is called the bride of Christ** (*2 Corinthians 11:2*). **The marriage relationship is used in Scripture to represent the union between believers and Christ** (*Ephesians 5:23*).

This woman of prophecy is clothed with the sun and has the moon under her feet. **The sun** represents the glory of the gospel age (*1 John 2:8*); and **the moon** under her feet, the weakening light of the former dispensation, Just as the moon shines with the reflected light of the sun, so the Old Testament system of types and shadows (in the sanctuary and its sacrifices) pointed forward to the cross. The church inherited all this. She is crowned with **a crown of twelve stars**, suggesting the twelve apostles. We also think of the twelve patriarchs and the twelve tribes of Israel in Old Testament tribes.

In the “man child” of Revelation 12:5 we undoubtedly have a portrayal of the birth of Jesus Christ. There is only one Child in all the history of our world who was ultimately to “rule all nations” and be “caught up unto God and to His throne.” That Child was Jesus.

In the first prophecy in the Bible, we read:

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall

bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.”—*Genesis 3:15*.

**It was the church which brought forth this Child. The church became the object of the special hatred of the dragon** (identified in verse nine as Satan) because she brought forth One who was to be his Conqueror.

“**And the woman fled into the wilderness**, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.”—*Revelation 12:6*.

#### THE MEANING OF THE DRAGON

We will learn more about that verse later. **From whence did Satan first come? from a “war in heaven.”**

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found anymore in heaven.

“**And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan**, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”—*Revelation 12:7-9*.

**The church has been the object of Satan’s wrath from the beginning.** Satan personally opposed the Lord Jesus during His life on earth and, through earthly powers, worked against Him and His church.

**What great world power was waiting to devour and destroy Jesus when He was born?**

“And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.”—*Luke 2:1*.

Augustus was emperor of pagan Rome, the empire which stretched over almost the entire western civilized world at that time. **Who attempted to kill the baby Jesus? The soldiers of Herod**, a satellite king ruling under the authority of Rome.

**A Roman official turned Christ over to the mob for crucifixion, and Roman soldiers had charge** of that shameful ordeal on dark Golgotha. It was by decree of the Roman governor that His tomb was sealed with the official seal.

**So Satan was working through the pagan Roman Empire.** In the prophecy of Daniel 7, the fourth beast had **ten horns**, just as the dragon in this prophecy of Revelation 12 has ten horns. As we learned earlier, the horns represent the ten divisions of the Roman Empire, which finally became the nations of modern Europe.

The **dragon** symbol was often pictured on Roman military ensigns, according to the Roman author Prudentius.

**So Satan is the primary power symbolized**

**by the dragon, and Rome is the secondary, or earthly, power.**

#### THE MAN CHILD CAUGHT UP TO HEAVEN

But not even death could subdue the Son of God. Soon afterward, **Christ “was caught up unto God, and to His throne.”**

**It was on the cross that our Saviour really won the victory** over Satan. He said:

“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die.”—*John 12:31-33*.

**In Revelation 12 is described the rejoicing in heaven over our Saviour’s wonderful triumph** in the great controversy with Satan.

“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.”—*Revelation 12:10*.

#### THE PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH

**Having failed to overcome Christ, Satan turned his wrath upon the church**, the object of Christ’s supreme regard.

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

“Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”—*Revelation 12:11-12*.

**The story of Revelation 12 covers many centuries. It begins with heavy persecution by Roman paganism**, enforced by the imperial authority of Rome. During this time large numbers sealed their faith with their blood.

“And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.”—*Revelation 12:13*.

The enemies of Christianity thought they had crushed out the new religion. But Jesus had said of His church, “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (*Matthew 16:18*).

**The Apostle Paul had spoken of grievous wolves entering into the fold** (*Acts 20:29*) and of “a great fight of afflictions” (*Hebrews 10:32*).

**So now persecution came in a new form.** During the first few centuries the newborn Christian church gradually grew in favor. The pagan peoples that at first persecuted her became favorably impressed. At last **the Roman Empire outwardly embraced the Christian faith.** —And the Roman

**Empire became transformed into an ecclesiastical empire: a church-state.**

But with this newfound favor and popularity came a corresponding letdown in devotion and faithful doctrinal interpretation by many in the church. **Into the church crept rites and ceremonies, doctrines and practices, of which Paul or Peter had never heard.**

However, during this period of deepening apostasy **there always remained a section of the church which remained true and loyal to God** and to “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” **Thus a major split occurred**, with the apostate church headquartered in Rome, while the original core of faithful Christians remained true in spite of growing persecution from by their compromising brethren.

**Like the waters of a great flood, persecution was poured out upon the humble followers of Christ.** Here is how it is pictured in prophecy:

“**And the woman fled into the wilderness**, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days . .

“And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, **he persecuted the woman** which brought forth the man child.

“And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

“And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

“And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.”—*Revelation 12:6, 13-16.*

At last the persecution became so severe that the true church, the few who remained faithful to God, were driven into **the “wilderness”**—distant rural areas, symbolized by “the earth”—into obscurity, where the faithful church remained hunted and sometimes slain for many centuries. **The “waters”** were the many soldiers and betrayers set on their track to hunt them down and slay them.

**This continued for “a thousand two hundred and threescore days” (verse 6).** You will remember that in symbolic prophecy a day represents a literal year. For 1260 years the church was to be often persecuted and oppressed.

But in every age there were witnesses for God. **All through the Dark Ages there were men and women in many lands who held to the Word of God—the Bible—and refused to obey the traditions, rites, and ceremonies which had been**

**borrowed from paganism.**

**Dr. John Milner, a leading Protestant speaker and writer**, in his book, *The End of Religious Controversy*, wrote this:

“There is but one inquiry to be made, namely, ‘Which is the true church?’. . . **By solving this one question, ‘Which is the true church?’ you will at once solve every question of religious controversy that ever has been, or that ever can be agitated.**”—J. Milner, *The End of Religious Controversy*, p. 95.

**It is easy to open a safe if the right combination is known.** Just so, when the true church is known, real truth can be found. In 1 Timothy 3:15, Paul says the church of God is the “pillar and ground of the truth.” The true church is the bank, or depository, of the truth of God. It is the truth that Jesus Christ wants Christians to follow.

More than that, there also will be the answer to the inmost question in the heart of every true Christian, “Lord, what will You have me to do?”

#### INTO AND OUT OF THE TUNNEL

**Truth has come out of the wilderness the same as it went in**, tarnished by the experience, to be sure, but needing only to be polished and presented once again to the world as the truth “once delivered to the saints.”

**Have you ever stood on a mountaintop and watched a train** across the valley winding its way along the shiny rails and into a tunnel? As the train disappears into the mountain, you turn at once to the other end of the tunnel, fully expecting to see it emerge *just as it went in*.

In A.D. 95 as the last New Testament book was written and the Apostle John died, **the early, pure Christian church entered the tunnel. It has now come back out.** For, you see, the story of Revelation 12 is not ended yet. **There is one more verse in this fascinating prophecy.**

#### THE MESSAGE OF REVELATION 12

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with **the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.**”—*Revelation 12:17.*

**This verse identifies the train that entered the tunnel, which has again emerged from it!** The “remnant of her seed,” **the last part of the church’s offspring in our time in history, consists of those who “keep the commandments of God”**—just as did the apostolic church before it entered the tunnel.

**The wrath of the dragon, in these last days, is still turned upon the church of God.** We live in the days when the remnant, the last segment, of the church will carry the torch of truth. It is possible

to recognize the woman in white. **It is possible to identify the remnant.**

The remnant of the church, like the remnant of a bolt of cloth, will exhibit the same *weave* of doctrinal exposition, the same *pattern* of obedience, the same *color* of spirituality, as the original.

**It is the same truth that angered the dragon in the days of the apostles**, the same truth for which the Waldenses, the Huguenots, and others, laid down their lives. The woman in white was forced to flee into the wilderness, but God preserved her there. It is the greatest story of wilderness survival ever told.

**The faithful stand today, undaunted and unafraid, proclaiming truth, the same truth as the early, pure church**, to this last generation.

**Fearlessly the true church in our day proclaims the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus**, in spite of the increasing wrath of the dragon.

**The controversy is not over yet. Once again demands are to be made upon the consciences of men.** Once again men will have to choose whom they will obey.

The final battles will be fought not in the wilderness of darkness and superstition, but in the full light of this generation in which knowledge has increased to astounding proportions. In this enlightened age, every man will decide!

**Truth will triumph. You and I may triumph with it—if we choose!**

Will we remain true to Christ, in spite of the harassment and persecution we are sure to encounter? No matter how terrible the warfare may be, God will help us remain loyal and obedient to the end.

**At the battle of Inkerman**, a famous conflict of the Crimean War, a wounded soldier crawled into his tent. They found him there, face down, his hand glued by his own blood to the pages of an open Bible. When his hand was lifted, these printed letters were seen traced upon it: "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (*John 11:25*).

**The oil wells of Arabia, the gold of Transvaal**, the diamonds of Kimberley, all multiplied in value a thousandfold, would be a price far too small to compare with the eternal life that Christ offers us!

**Regardless of how we feel from day to day**, ignoring the depression and discouragement that Satan would like to place upon us,—**we look to Christ and determine to humbly, patiently obey His commandments.**

**Here, just two verses before the Second Ad-**

**vent is presented, is another view of God's faithful remnant:**

**"Here is the patience of the saints:** here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."—*Revelation 14:12*.

**Our future is bright, if we will remain with Jesus and His Inspired Word.**

**"Someone asked Luther**, 'Do you feel That you have been forgiven?' He answered, 'No, But I'm as sure As there's a God in heaven.

"For feelings come, and feelings go, And feelings are deceiving, My warrant is the Word of God. Naught else is worth believing!"

Oh, thank God every day that, if we cling to Christ, we can have eternal life!

**"Arise my soul, arise**, shake off thy guilty fears; The bleeding Sacrifice in my behalf appears. Before the throne my Surety stands, My name is written in His hands." —Charles Wesley

#### SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

**Revelation 12 predicted** that Christ's faithful ones would suffer terrible persecution for over a thousand years. **Here is a very, very brief glimpse of what happened during the Dark Ages to millions of Christ's faithful followers**, who refused to stop obeying the teachings of the Bible:

**"That the church of Rome has shed more innocent blood than any other institution that has ever existed among mankind, will be questioned by no Protestant who has a competent knowledge of history . . .** It is impossible to form a complete conception of the multitude of her victims, and it is quite certain that no powers of imagination can adequately realize their sufferings."—*W.E.H. Lecky, History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe*, Vol. 2, p. 32, 1910 edition.

(An excellent though lengthy article describing in detail the right of the Roman Catholic Church to do this will be found in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 12, p. 266).

**"For professing faith contrary to the teachings of the Church of Rome history records the martyrdom of more than one hundred million people.** A million Waldenses and Albigenes Swiss and French Protestants perished during a crusade proclaimed by Pope Innocent III in 1208. Beginning from the establishment of the Jesuits in 1540 to 1580, nine hundred thousand were destroyed. One hundred and fifty thousand perished by the Inquisition in thirty years. Within the space of thirty-eight years after the edict of Charles V against the Protestants, fifty thousand persons were hanged, beheaded, or burned alive for heresy. Eighteen thousand more perished during the administration of the Duke of Alba in five and a half years."—*Brief Bible Readings*, p. 16.

**In Revelation 17:6, this strange power (under the figure of an evil woman) is said to be “drunken with the blood of the saints.”** This is an obvious description of the papacy which slew so many of God’s people. (The “purple and scarlet” is yet another means of identifying this woman. The cardinals wear scarlet and the bishops have purple bands on their robes.)

“And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. And upon her forehead was a name written, ‘Mystery, Babylon, the Mother of harlots . . . And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.’—*Revelation 17:4-6*.

**In France on August 24, 1572**, by a carefully arranged plan under Jesuit influence, 70,000 Protestants were murdered within the space of two months. The pope rejoiced when he heard the news of the successful outcome.

“Catholics say only 30,000 were slain. Protestants put the number at 70,000. **We prefer the latter figure.** If there were 70,000 Huguenots (French Protestants) in Paris the night of the massacre, so much the more justification for the slaughter . . . We have heard ring out many times the very bells that called the Catholics together on that fatal night. They always sounded sweetly in our ears.”—*Western Watchman*, November 21, 1912 (RC).

**“From the birth of popery to the present time, it is estimated by careful and credible historians, that far more than fifty million of the human family have been slaughtered** for the crime of heresy by popish persecutors,—an average of more than 40,000 religious murders for every year of the existence of popery. Of course the average number of victims, yearly, was vastly greater during those gloomy ages when popery was in her glory and reigned despot of the world; and it has been much less since the power of the popes has diminished to tyrannize over the nations, and to compel the princes of the earth, by the terror of excommunication, interdiction, and deposition, to butcher their heretical subjects.”—*John Dowling, The History of Romanism*, pp. 541-542.

**Bellarmino is one of the most revered Jesuit teachers** in the history of the Gregorian University in Rome, the first and largest Jesuit training school in the world.

“‘The church,’ says Martin Luther, has never burned a heretic.’ . . . I reply that this argument proves not the opinion, but the ignorance or impudence of Luther. Since **‘almost infinite numbers were either burned or otherwise killed,’** Luther either did not know it, and was therefore ignorant, or if he was not ignorant, he is convicted of impudence

and falsehood, —for that heretics were often burned by the Catholic Church may be proved from many examples.”—*Robert Bellarmine, Disputationes de Controversiis*, Tom. ii, Lib. III, cap. XXII, 1682 edition. [Bellarmine, later canonized as a saint, was a leading Jesuit leader and writer.]

“There are many unquestionable cases of Protestants punished as heretics **in nearly all the lands where Roman Catholics have had power, right down to the French Revolution, right down to 1798.**”—G.G. Coulton, *The Death-Penalty for Heresy*, *Medieval Studies*, No. 18, 1924 edition, pp. 62. The author was a well-known member of the French Academy and an enthusiastic champion of Catholicism.

“**Heresy** [as defined by Rome] is the willful holding by a baptized person of doctrines which contradict an article of faith defined by the Catholic Church.”—P. Hinschius, “Heresy,” *The New Schaff Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. 5, pp. 234-235 (1909).

**“Every cardinal, archbishop, and bishop in the Catholic Church takes an oath of allegiance to the pope**, in which occur the following words: ‘Heretics, schismatics, and rebels to our said lord (the pope), or his aforesaid successors, I will to my utmost persecute and oppose.’”—*Josiah Strong, Our Country*, Chapter 5.

**“The papal church will never relinquish her claim to infallibility.** All that she has done in her persecution of those who reject her dogmas she holds to be right; and would she not repeat the same acts, should the opportunity be presented? Let the restraints now imposed by secular governments be removed and Rome be reinstated in her former power, and there would speedily be a revival of her tyranny and persecution.”—*Great Controversy*, 564.

Vatican Council I was summoned by Pope Pius IX by the bull *Aeterni Patris* of 29 June 1868. It made official (at Session 4, on July 18, 1870) the doctrine of *papal infallibility* which had been practiced for over 1,500 years.

The principle of infallibility means that everything done under the direction of the pope in preceding centuries was correct, and that it will be done again in the future, if given the opportunity; for, as it is often said at the Vatican, “Rome never changes.”

**“When a religion is good, I conceive that it will support itself;** and, when it cannot support itself, and God does not take care to support it, so that its professors are obliged to call for the help of the civil power, it is a sign, I apprehend, of its being a bad one.”—*Benjamin Franklin, Letter dated October 9, 1780; in The Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, Vol. 8, p. 154.

**“Condemn no man for not thinking as you think: Let every one enjoy the full and free liberty of thinking for himself.** Let every man use his own

judgment, since every man must give an account of himself to God. Abhor every approach, in any kind or degree, to the spirit of persecution. If you cannot reason or persuade a man into the truth, never attempt to force him into it. If love will not compel him to come, leave him to God, the Judge of all.”—*John Wesley, “Advice to the People Called Methodists,” in his Works, Vol. 8, p. 357.*

#### **MY COMMITMENT**

Thank you, Father, that Thy faithful ones remained loyal to Thee through those centuries of terrible persecution. May I be loyal to Thee and Thy commandments today, just as they were back then! I too want to be part of this final, remnant people who obey Thy law. In Jesus’ name, I ask this. Amen.

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**COMING NEXT**—Revelation 12 is directly connected to Revelation 13. We now want to go to that important chapter and learn the message that God has in it for us.

A Complete Evangelistic Sermon: Chapter Thirty-Eight

# The Prophecy of Revelation 13

*The Final Marking Time*

A few days after the Civil War had officially ended, a man was riding along a road in West Virginia. Suddenly, a soldier, clad in a dirty and tattered Confederate uniform, sprang out of a thicket, seized the horse's bridle, and with twitching face demanded, "Give me bread! Give me bread! I don't want to hurt you, but give me bread—I'm starving!"

The man on horseback replied, "Then why don't you go to the village and get food?" "I don't dare—they will shoot me," was the soldier's answer.

He then told how he had deserted from Lee's army a few weeks earlier. At that time, upon approaching the Union pickets, he had been informed that no fugitives from Lee's army were to be taken in. What was he to do? If he returned to his company, he would be shot as a deserter. In desperation, he had taken to the woods and lived on roots and berries.

Then showing him the headline of a newspaper, the man on horseback exclaimed, "Don't you know the war is over? Lincoln has pardoned the whole Confederate army. Go into any nearby town and you can have all the food you want!"

With a shout of joy, the soldier dropped the bridle and ran to the village.

**Even though Satan is still working through his agencies to harass and destroy,—the outcome of the war between Christ and Satan is over, for Christ won it on Calvary!**

**However, there are still battles, just ahead of us, to be fought. Revelation 13 tells us about a great crisis that is soon to engulf the entire world.**

**In the books of Daniel and Revelation, God has provided us with a remarkable number of prophecies, which keep building on one another.**

As we studied earlier, in Daniel 2 is presented the great image, representing human history from Babylon (600 B.C.) through Medo-Persia, Grecia, Rome, and its breakup into ten main kingdoms, to the Second Coming of Christ and the setting up of God's kingdom of glory.

**In Daniel 7, we learned that the same period is shown in the four great beasts: the lion, bear, leopard, and the dreadful beast. This terrible beast represented Rome and it had ten horns for the ten divisions; which eventually became modern Europe.**

**Another "little horn" came up among the ten. This was the papal power, standing in supremacy**

for 1260 years from A.D. 538 to A.D. 1798. It spoke words against God, made war on the saints of God, and thought to change the law of God.

This chapter also introduces us to the judgment day, Christ's coming, and the rise of His kingdom.

**In our study on Daniel 8 and 9, additional information about Medo-Persia and Grecia and that "little horn" is given.** A.D. 1844 was established as the time for the beginning of the cleansing of the Sanctuary. This is the work of the Investigative Judgment in heaven.

**We now come to Revelation 13.** The information we have learned in Daniel 2, 7, 8 and 9, and also Revelation 12 enables us to better understand what we are about to discover as we open the book of Revelation to chapter 13.

**"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.**

**"And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority."**—Revelation 13:1-2.

## THE LEOPARD BEAST

**In Revelation 13 we have a beast composed of parts of the three former beasts of Daniel 7.** It is variously called the leopard beast, the ten-horned beast, the composite beast, and the first beast of Revelation 13.

**A beast in Bible prophecy represents a great earthly power or kingdom;** a head or horn a governing power; and waters represent "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (Revelation 17:15). The ten horns identify it with the ten divisions of the Roman Empire, which now is modern Europe.

Coming up out of the sea, this beast had seven heads and ten crowned horns. It looked like a leopard with a bear's feet and a lion's mouth. **"The dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority"** (Revelation 13:2). The dragon, we learned from our study of Revelation 12, represents Satan, but also his earthly representative, Rome.

This unusual beast would combine the natures of the lion (Babylon), the bear (Medo-Persia), and the leopard (Grecia), and was to take over the reins of power following the dragon of pagan Rome.

"History traces the passage of the old Babylonian system of religion straight on through Medo-Persia to Grecia, and from Grecia into Rome, to leaven the religious life of the pagan Roman Empire. This, in turn, leavened the great apostasy in Christendom that grew into the Roman papacy. The papacy was

the heir of the superstitions and false philosophies of all the ages, from Babylon down.”—*Beacon Lights of Prophecy*, pp. 279-280.

#### PAGAN TO PAPAL POWER TRANSFER

Since, in Daniel 7, the little horn papal power followed the terrible beast power of pagan Rome, it is not surprising to find that **this leopard papal beast of Revelation 13 followed the dragon power of pagan Rome.**

Concerning the shift from pagan to papal power, James Conroy writes:

“Long ages ago, when Rome through the neglect of the Western emperors was left to the mercy of barbarous hordes, Romans turned to one figure for aid and protection and asked him to rule them; and thus . . . commenced the temporal sovereignty of the popes. **And stepping to the throne of Caesar, the vicar of Christ took up the scepter to which the emperors and kings of Europe were to bow in reverence** through so many ages.”—James H. Conroy, “Two Romes,” *The American Catholic Quarterly Review*, April 11, 1911, p. 194.

**Thus the papacy took over the seat of pagan Rome.** The word “seat” means the “seat (central capital) of government.” The word “see” used in “Holy See” means the same thing. There the pope sits today in the city of Rome, the seat of the ancient pagan empire. Pagan Rome gave papal Rome its seat, or see.

**Here is the historical background of this:** Under the later Roman emperors, after Constantine, the religion of the Roman government was changed from pagan to papal. The bishops of Rome received rich gifts and great authority from Constantine and succeeding emperors. **After A.D. 476 the bishop of Rome became the most influential power in western Rome.** And Justinian, by 533, was declared “head of all the holy churches,” and “corrector of heretics.”

“The removal of the capital of the Empire, from Rome to Constantinople in 330, left the Western Church practically free from imperial power, to develop its own form of organization. **The bishop of Rome, in the seat of the Caesars,** was now the greatest man in the West, and was soon [when the barbarians overran the empire] forced to become the political as well as the spiritual head.”—A.C. Flick, *The Rise of the Mediaeval Church*, p. 168.

“Whatever Roman elements the barbarians and Arians left . . . came under the protection of the bishop of Rome, who was the chief person there after the Emperor’s disappearance [when he moved to Constantinople in A.D. 330] . . . **The Roman church in this way pushed itself into the place of the Roman World Empire, of which it is the actual continuation.** The empire has not perished, but has only undergone a transformation.”—Adolf Harnack,

*What is Christianity?* p. 269.

**“One of the most stupendous institutions in history has been the papacy.** Throughout the Middle Ages it dominated Western Europe. This papacy has been in many senses the legatee of the dying empire of the West. The pope in the chair of Peter is to a large extent the successor of the emperor on the seat of Augustus or the throne of Constantine.”—*Seignobo’s History of the Roman People*, p. 460.

“The pope, who calls himself ‘king’ and ‘Pontifex Maximus,’ is Caesar’s successor.”—*Ibid.*, p. 270.

“And all the world wondered after the beast.” *Revelation 13:3.* The papacy is a world power.

“And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.”—*Revelation 13:5.*

#### “SPEAKING GREAT THINGS”

**This leopard beast had “a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.”** By claiming to be the vicar of Christ on earth, he “sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (2 *Thessalonians 2:4*). Cardinal Bellarmine, the leading Catholic theologian of his time, wrote this:

**“All names which in the Scriptures are applied to Christ,** by virtue of which it is established that he is over the church, **all the same names are applied to the pope.**”—Robert Bellarmine, *Disputationes de Controversiis*, Tom. 2, “*Controversia Prima*,” Book 2, titled *De Conciliorum Auctoritate* [On the Authority of the Church], Chapter 17, p. 266.

The Lateran Council was an important Roman Catholic council. The following speech was included in its records:

“For thou [the pope] art the shepherd, thou art the physician, thou art the director, thou art the husbandman; **finally, thou art another God on earth.**”—Christopher Marcelus’ *Oration in the Fifth Lateran Council, 4th session*, in J.D. Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum*, Vol. 32, Col. 761.

“The pope is the supreme judge of the law of the land . . . **He is the vicegerent of Christ, and not only a Priest forever, but also King of kings** and Lord of lords.”—*La Civiltà Cattolica*, March 18, 1871.

**“The pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God,** and the vicar of God . . . Hence the pope is crowned with a triple crown, as king of heaven and of earth, and of the lower regions.”—F. Lucius Ferraris, *Prompta Bibliotheca Canonica Juridica Moralis Theologica*, printed at Rome in 1890, and approved by the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (Vol. 6, p. 48).

“To make war against the pope is to make war against God, seeing God is the pope **and the pope is God.**”—Marens, *Catholic History*.

“The pope is not only the representative of Jesus

Christ, but **he is Jesus Christ Himself**, hidden under the veil of flesh.”—*Catholic National*, July 1895.

**This is the very same power as the “little horn” of Daniel 7:8, 25**, which had “a mouth speaking great things” “against the Most High.” Both the little horn and the leopard beast also make war upon the saints, and both continue for the same period of time.

**This power was “to continue forty and two months.”** This is the same as the 1260 days, or years, of the “little horn” power in Daniel 7. A note on Revelation 13:1 in the Catholic *Douay* Bible says that the power which this beast represents would ultimately become “the great Antichrist and his empire.” That this power is the papacy, there can be little doubt. It was “to make war with the saints” (*Revelation 13:7*) as the little horn had done.

“And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.”—*Revelation 13:3*.

#### POWER BROKEN AND RECOVERED

**Its power was to be broken.** “He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity” (*verse 10*). It was to be “wounded to death.” **This took place in 1798**, at the end of the 1260 years, when the French General Berthier took Pope Pius VI prisoner, and hastened him as a captive from prison to prison outside of Rome. He died in the French fortress of Valence eighteen months later.

**In 1870, the papacy received another blow**, when Rome was seized by Italy and used as its capital. No longer controlling even the city of Rome, the pope looked upon himself as a voluntary “prisoner of the Vatican.” Hence in 1798 and 1870 he who had sent others into captivity went himself into captivity.

**But the deadly wound was to be healed. In 1929 the situation had changed** to the extent that Cardinal Gasparri met Premier Mussolini in the historical palace of Saint John Lateran—and returned temporal power to the papacy to “heal a wound of 59 years” (*The Catholic Advocate*, April 18, 1929, p. 16).

The front page of the *San Francisco Chronicle* of February 12, 1929, had pictures of Cardinal Gasparri and Mussolini, signers of the *Concordat of Rome*, with the headline, “Heal Wound of Many Years.” The Associated Press dispatch said “In affixing the autographs to the memorable document, healing the wound which has festered since 1870, extreme cordiality was displayed on both sides.”

On March 9, 1929, the pope said, “The peoples of the entire world are with us.” Today the papacy is coming back into great power.

“And they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is

like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?”—*Revelation 13:4*.

“Yet since then [1798], the papacy has been lifted to a pinnacle of spiritual power unreached, it may be, since earliest Christian history.”—*Lectures on the History of Religions*, ed. by Joseph Rickaby, S.J. [*Jesuit*], Vol. 3, Lecture 24.

#### NUMBER OF THE BEAST

**It is clearly evident that this beast power is the papacy, or “little horn” power of Daniel 7.** But one additional point of identification is given.

“Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.”—*Revelation 13:18*.

**This beast has a number, and it is the number of a man’s name** (*verse 17*). The man would naturally be the head of the papacy, or the pope.

**A leading title for the pope is “Vicar of [second in command to] the Son of God.”** In Latin this is *Vicarius Filii Dei*. Adding up the numeral letters in this title we have:

V—5, I—1, C—100 (A and R have no numerical value in Latin), L—50, I—1, I—1, V (same as U)—5, (S and F no value), I—1.

**This totals 666, the number the Bible gives for the beast.** This follows the ancient custom of a person’s having a name and a number also.

The Roman Catholic *Douay* Bible gives this note on Revelation 13:18: “Six hundred sixty-six. The numeral letters of his name shall make up this number.”

*This caution should be mentioned: The beast is not identified merely by the number 666. It is only one point in many.* Other names will work out to the number 666, but that does not prove them to be the beast. The beast was in supremacy 1260 years and did many things which identify the papacy, and the papacy only, as the leopard beast of Revelation 13. The number 666 is just another point in favor of a position already proved.

#### THE LAMBLIKE BEAST

**In Revelation 13, a second beast (also called the two-horned beast) then arises.**

“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.”—*Revelation 13:11-12*.

**John Wesley**, in his note on Revelation 13:11, wrote this in 1754 about this second beast of Revelation 13:

“He is not yet come, though he cannot be far

off. For he is to appear at the end of the forty-two months of the first beast.”—*John Wesley, Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament, Vol. 3, p. 299.*

Wesley, a careful Bible student, wrote those words 25 years before the Declaration of Independence, in 1779, and 44 years before the end of the 1260 year prophecy in 1798, when the pope was taken captive.

**The previous beast came up out of the “sea,”** which indicates its rise among the peoples and nations of the world then in existence; **whereas this second power came up out of “the earth,”** where there had not before been “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” (*Revelation 17:15*).

When the papal power received its deadly wound in 1798, **the United States was the only great world power then coming into prominence in territory not previously occupied** by multitudes of people. Only nine years earlier, in 1789, it adopted its Constitution. Therefore, it is within the territory of the United States that we should look for a fulfillment of this prophecy of the second beast of Revelation 13.

**“No nation in modern history has ever occupied a position of responsibility comparable to that of this country . . . thrust upon it in so short a time.”**—*General George C. Marshall, quoted in Time, March 29, 1948.*

“America today is in a position of unparalleled physical, if not spiritual eminence. No other nation in all the history of the world has so towered over the other nations like a colossus.”—*David L. Cohn, in Quote magazine, April 11, 1948.*

**Nations are brought to view in the Bible for two main reasons:**

**The first reason is to reveal the hand of God in history and prophecy,** and verify the reliability of both.

“The Word of our God shall stand forever.”—*Isaiah 40:8.*

“I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done . . . I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass.”—*Isaiah 46:9-11.*

**The second reason for national mention is contact with God’s people, church, and work.** *Egypt* fed Israel in famine, enslaved her in bondage, and later made war and alliances with her. *Assyria* battled her, captured her, released her, and made affinity with her. *Babylon* destroyed her city and Temple and took her captive. *Medo-Persia* gave her freedom and assisted in her rebuilding. *Greece* furnished a universal language for the gospel. *Rome* subjected the Jews, crucified Christ, destroyed Jerusalem, and persecuted Christians. *Papal Rome* adulterated the gospel, persecuted the church, and

ruled over the nations through the union of church and state. The main *national divisions* of the old Roman Empire exist as the modern nations of Europe, all in direct contact with organized, professed Christianity. All these nations figure in Bible history or prophecy.

#### GROWTH OUT OF NOTHING

**The United States was coming into power as the papacy was declining in power.** It is recorded that from 1817 to 1867, twenty-one governments disappeared, and only three new ones arose. During that same time, the United States added nearly two million square miles of territory, and eight hundred thousand more than all other nations combined.

“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb.”—*Revelation 13:11.*

**A lamb is young.** This power was not to be an old nation in a sudden burst of new life. It was to be young in 1798.

**It came up out of the earth,** in a thinly populated area, far removed from the old centers of habitation.

**“The history of the United States was separated by the beneficent Providence far from this wild and cruel history of the rest of the world.”**—*George A. Townsend, The New World Compared with the Old, p. 635.*

We are told that it would be “coming up out of the earth.” The phrase, in the original Greek, means “to grow or spring up as a plant.” “Like a silent seed, we grew into an empire” (*G.A. Townsend, ibid.*). The nation was “emerging . . . amid the silence of the earth, daily adding to its power” (*Dublin Nation*).

#### “HORNS LIKE A LAMB”

**This nation would have “horns like a lamb.”** The nations of the past were portrayed in Bible prophecy as beasts of prey, filled with intolerance, persecution, and oppression. In sharp contrast, **the United States was founded on the principles of liberty, equality, and tolerance.** Since horns in prophecy stand for power, the lamblike horns suggest the basic character of American government.

“What the world has not seen for ages; *viz*, a church without a pope, and a state without a king.”—*J.A. Bingham.*

**The principles of civil and religious liberty which have made the United States great were incorporated into the fundamental law of the nation at its very founding.**

As a young boy, Thomas Jefferson heard an old Baptist minister preaching from the window of a prison cell, down in old Virginia. From that day there was implanted in him a burning desire to protect for

his nation freedom of conscience, if he should ever have the opportunity. Tirelessly he worked, along with others who had the same determination, until the First Amendment was placed in the Constitution. It reads simply:

**“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”—The First Amendment.**

Article IV, section 4, of the *Constitution* says, “The United States shall guarantee every state in this union a republican form of government.” That means representative government—a democracy.

Article VI reads, **“No religious test shall ever be required** as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.” Thus a citizen was free to profess any religion or no religion.

The horns of this power had no crowns. It was not a land of kings or popes. Since the Catholic church fundamentally believes in union of church and state, and that the individual is not free either to believe or to publicly advocate his own religious ideas, this nation was not to be dominantly Catholic. The religious thought of America has been preponderantly Protestant.

#### A GREAT CHANGE COMING

**Revelation 13 predicts that some kind of great change is going to occur in America!**

“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.”—*Revelation 13:11-12*.

According to this Bible prophecy, **in this land of freedom and basic Protestant faith, an image of the composite, leopard, papal beast is to be set up.**

The papacy has sought earnestly to regain its lost power; and it recognizes the way to do this is through the enactment of governmental laws favorable to Rome.

“First and foremost it is the duty of all Catholics worthy of the name and wishful to be known as the most loving children of the Church . . . to endeavor to bring back all civil society to the pattern and form of Christianity which we have described.”—*Encyclical letter, Immortale Dei, November 1, 1885, in The Great Encyclical Letters of Leo XIII, p. 132.*

**Tragically, we are here told that our historic principle of separation of church and state is going to be violated.**

That “first beast before him,” papal Rome, exer-

cised the power of persecuting all who differed with it in religious principles. It was a church dominating the civil power, a union of church and state, enforcing its religious dogmas by governmental authorities, by confiscation, imprisonment, and death. An image to this beast would be another ecclesiastical organization clothed with civil power—another union of church and state—to enforce religion by the enactment of a law.

Men are already declaring that America is too secular, and **they think the remedy is a uniting of the churches into a single ecumenical coalition of Protestant, Catholic, and orthodox denominations—to coerce the government to require certain religious demands.** The church, failing to save the people in the pews, would devise salvation in political halls.

“He spake as a dragon, and he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed, . . . saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

“And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.”—*Revelation 13:11-12, 14-15.*

We are told three things here:

**First, the voice of the dragon is to be heard in America.** That is the voice of persecution. Satan persecuted through pagan Rome, and then through papal Rome, and finally he will bring persecution in our own nation.

**Second, the same kind of power that the leopard beast manifested is to be exercised.** That means religious dogma enforced by civil law. Papal Rome was a church-state. This image will be another church-state.

**Third, the government will give “life” to the image of the beast.** This could only be done by the enactment of strict laws. When that legislation is passed, we shall have the living image of the beast, the practical union of church and state. So vigorous is this image to become that “as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.”

“That the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.”—*Rev. 13:15.*

**How does any nation speak? By its laws,** of course. How did pagan Rome speak? By its laws against Christians, resulting in terrible persecutions. How did papal Rome speak? By its laws abolishing Christian principles, including the Sabbath, and persecuting those who try to obey the Bible.

**The union of church and state, whether in pagan or Christian times, has always resulted in the persecution of the religious minority.** An official government decree decides which is the true church. Those, for example, not attending church are made to do so by police power.

The first “Christian” church-state made it possible for the Catholic church to initially gain great power. At the prompting of the Roman bishop (later called “the pope”), the Roman government decided that the property taken away from the Christians during the previous persecutions, should be returned—but *only to Christians attending the Catholic church!* All others were eventually forbidden to meet, and were called heretics.

**The key law which gave the papacy its power was signed into law at that time, Constantine’s Sunday law of A.D. 321.** The Sunday worship requirement became the keystone in the papacy’s drive for domination over Christians everywhere. This is because first-day worship is such an obvious violation of God’s commands in Scripture. To obey the papacy meant to accept it in place of God!

**The prophecy also predicts that America’s influence in this matter will be felt throughout the world.** Other nations are already seeking to unite in various coalitions, and English has become the international language.

#### THE SEAL AND THE MARK

**The prophecy of Revelation 13 tells us that this combined church-state image to the beast—will cause a mark to be placed on the “right hand” or “forehead” of all who obey these new laws.**

“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”—*Revelation 13:16-17.*

How could the worship of the papacy be brought about in a Protestant America? How could the mark of papal power be enforced in this land? What does worship of the beast involve?

We are here told “that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark.” This second beast, which at first appears like a lamb but will later speak as a dragon, will enforce a law so stringent that one will not buy or sell unless he accepts the papal mark.

**We earlier learned that God has one special sign of His authority. It is the seventh-day Sabbath (*Exodus 31:14-17*).** It was made at the close of Creation Week. It was based on the unchangeable facts of God’s creation and rest. He created six days, and made the Sabbath on the seventh day by rest-

ing upon it, blessing it, and sanctifying it for man’s use. “The Sabbath was made for man” (*Mark 2:27*).

**This seventh-day Sabbath was placed in the very heart of the Ten Commandments as a sign or seal.** The Fourth Commandment is the only one which identifies the Giver of the law, as well as the Moral Law’s authority and the extent of its application. The Lawgiver’s name is “the Lord thy God.” His title is Creator, or Maker of heaven and earth. His territory or dominion is “heaven and earth” (*Exodus 20:10-11*).

**A seal is used to witness to the validity of an enactment, or law,** which a governmental power may proclaim. It is used frequently in Scripture. In 1 Kings 21:8, Jezebel “wrote letters in Ahab’s name, and sealed them with his seal”—thus giving them the authority of King Ahab. In Esther 3:12, we read: “In the name of King Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king’s ring.” Later, in Esther 8:8, it says, The writing which is written in the king’s name, and sealed with the king’s ring, may no man reverse.”

**The words seal, sign, and mark are used synonymously in Scripture.** An example of this is in Romans 4:11, where we read that Abraham “received the *sign* of circumcision, a *seal* of the righteousness of the faith which he had.”

**When a law is sealed, it demands obedience.** To be authentic, every law must have a seal—a stamp of authority, of legality.

**God’s law is to be sealed among His disciples (*Isaiah 8:16*).** This can only be done because they are obeying it. By living in obedience to it, through the enabling grace of Christ, that law is to be in our hearts, and God wants to place His seal there.

**The message of Revelation 7:1-3, then, is to seal the law among the faithful, obedient children of God.**

“And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice, . . . hurt not the earth, . . . till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.”—*Revelation 7:2-3.*

Isaiah emphasizes the inseparable connection of the law to its seal, when he speaks of sealing the law among God’s people.

“Bind up the testimony, seal the law among My disciples.”—*Isaiah 8:16.*

#### THE MARK OF THE BEAST

**The dreaded mark in Revelation 13:16-18 is the opposite of the seal of God.** This terrible mark is also placed on people. It will be placed on those disobedient to the Moral Law of God, who, knowing about the Bible Sabbath, continue refusing to keep it. Here is more information about this:

**This mark is not a literal mark**—it is a spiritual thing, a way of worship, an attitude of the heart toward God. **Keep in mind that no one on earth could resist the mark if it were something branded on the skin**, as it were, from the outside and put there by force. **So this mark is something that you and I can resist, can refuse to accept.** Thank God that, although people will go to perdition for accepting this mark—God first warns them against it.

The important prophecy in Daniel 7 said that **the little horn power “shall think . . . to change times and laws”** (*Daniel 7:25, original Hebrew*). In other words, this power, “showing himself that he is God” (*2 Thessalonians 2:4*), would think himself able to change the fundamental, constitutional law of the Creator God! He would go so far as to change the seal of that law, the time element, the sign and mark of God’s power and authority.

God gave us His seal, the Sabbath, because He loves us and wants us to belong to Him. He wants us to come into full companionship with Him, so we can live with Him forever in heaven.

**God predicted that this attempted change of the Bible Sabbath would occur.** What does the papacy say? —**The papacy claims that it made the change, and that is a mark of papal power!** Note these Catholic statements:

“Q. **Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power** to institute festivals of precept [that is, to change what the Bible says]?”

“A. **Had she not had such power**, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her. **She could not have substituted the observance of Sunday**, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority.”—*Stephen Keenan, A Doctrinal Catechism*, p. 174.

**From Cardinal Gibbons** of Baltimore (1834-1921), the leading Catholic doctrinal authority in America in his time, came this statement:

“Of course, the Catholic Church claims that the change was her act; it could not have been otherwise, as none in those days would have dreamed of doing anything in matters spiritual and ecclesiastical and religious without her. **And the act is a MARK of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters.**”—*Cardinal Gibbons, letter dated July 7, 1895*.

Thus God’s sign, or mark, or seal, was taken out of the law and the counterfeit sabbath, the Sunday institution was put in its place. **How natural for this act to be set forth as a sign, or mark, of the papal authority.**

**Through the prophet Daniel, God predicted the attempted change of the Sabbath. Then**

**through John the revelator God forecast the exaltation of the papal mark by civil government.** Sundaykeeping would be enforced by the power of civil law in America.

We will have an image to the first beast when churches select some doctrinal point upon which all may unite, and when they gain power to define and enforce their dogmas by governmental law.

**However, there is only one doctrine upon which all the churches can unite**, and that is a law enforcing the observance of Sunday as a rest day.

As we learned earlier, **by mutual agreement at the Council of Trent on January 18, 1562, the authority of the papacy was recognized as hanging on Sunday sacredness—and the obedience of non-Catholics in carefully worshiping on that day.**

There have, for years, been efforts to secure such a law, but it has not succeeded on a nationwide level. **A Congressional enactment of a strict law would be required.**

“And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”—*Revelation 13:17*.

Today most States in the Union have Sunday laws on the books, although frequently not enforced. There is a perennial effort for a National Sunday Law.

**The Catholic power wants more emphasis on Sunday observance.** An Associated Press dispatch from Vatican City, September 8, 1947, reporting the pope’s call for “action,” said:

“While a plane dropped thousands of leaflets bearing the [Catholic version of the] Ten Commandments on the vast throng, the pope, his voice transmitted over a series of loudspeakers, declared that the battle in religious and moral fields hinged on . . . the sanctifying of Sunday.”—*The Washington Evening Star, September 8, 1947, p. A11*.

#### **CURRENT DRIVE FOR A SUNDAY LAW**

Here is an example of a more recent papal call for men to honor the day set apart, not by the command of God, but by the command of the state:

(Much of the information below is from the present author’s book, *Enforced Sunday Law*. See back of this book. )

**For over 20 years, prior to becoming Pope, Benedict XVI who became Joseph Ratzinger on April 19, 2005, was in charge of preparing all doctrinal statements and positions, official and secret, of the Vatican.** John Paul II was the traveler, good at meeting people. But back in Rome, Ratzinger made the decisions as to what should be written—and then wrote out the pope’s official documents. They made a good team.

Due to John Paul II's deteriorating physical condition, **by 1996, Cardinal Ratzinger was, for all practical purposes, in charge of the Vatican.** It was an enormous responsibility, yet one which for a number of years he had gradually taken more and more responsibility. Everyone recognized that Ratzinger was more brilliant than anyone else in the Vatican and entitled to be the natural leader until John Paul's death brought a new pope to the Church.

**In 1998, Cardinal Ratzinger wrote a startling Apostolic Letter, which John Paul issued on May 31 in St. Peter's Basilica. Entitled, *Dies Domini* (The Lord's Day), it was a call for all the nations of earth to enact strict National Sunday Laws.**

In this document, while first reviewing the history of Sunday worship, **Ratzinger admitted that Sunday worship was "Christianized" from the day on which the pagan sun god was worshiped.**

This papal document then went on to state the need for Sunday laws today.

"Even in our own day work is very oppressive for many people . . . When **through the centuries, she [the Catholic Church] has made laws concerning Sunday rest, the Church has had in mind . . . greater regulation** to lighten its burden and thus enable everyone to keep the Lord's Day holy . . . My predecessor Pope Leo XIII in his *Encyclical Rerum Novarum* spoke of Sunday rest as a worker's right **which the State must guarantee.**"—*Dies Domini*, p. 23, Section 66.

"Therefore, also in the particular circumstances of our own time, **Christians will naturally strive to ensure that civil legislation respects their duty to keep Sunday holy.**"—*Ibid.*, p. 23, Section 67.

The front page headline article in the *Detroit News* for July 7, 1998, summarized the papal document in this sentence:

"**In his letter, the pope goes on to say a violator should be 'punished as heretic,'** said Jay McNally who read an unofficial English translation of the letter on a Vatican website."—*Detroit News*, Tuesday, July 7, 1998.

**Within three years he would begin working more actively to fulfill it.** Ratzinger recognized that which many did not: **There was only one way to get national Sunday laws enacted. It was by forming immense ecumenical councils, which included all the major Christian denominations—and was dominated by its Catholic organizers.** These would be able to coerce governmental authorities to enact strict national Sunday laws.

Ratzinger envisioned doing this, not only in America but, elsewhere in the world. **While the Catholic Church had never previously joined any ecumenical body anywhere,—this was now**

**suddenly to change.**

Ratzinger set to work to start two new ecumenical organizations, in which leading Catholics could hold important positions on the planning and executive committees:

**The first was the Global Christian Forum (GCF).** Initially proposed at a December 1998 international ecumenical meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe, it was brought into existence in **2000 during an International Consultation held at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena in September 2000.** GCF is now worldwide in scope, immense in size, and includes Christian churches from nearly every nation on earth. This was the first time in history that the Roman Catholic Church has been part of an international ecumenical body. It had never joined the *World Council of Churches*, although it had been a voting member of its leading theological committee since 1967, two years after the end of *Vatican II*.

**The second new, gigantic coalition, *Christian Churches Together*, was started here in the United States in 2001 in order to unite nearly all its churches in one immense coalition that will be able to be a political powerhouse in our nation.**

**These are the two most important ecumenical organizations in existence, but our primary concern in this book will be with events here in America.**

**In the summer of 2001, Cardinal William H. Keeler of Baltimore unexpectedly sent invitations for three high-ranking churchmen to meet with him at his official residence in Baltimore.** In July, two Protestant leaders and a fellow Catholic conferred with him and laid the initial plans for a startling, new super ecumenical organization—which would include every major Christian church in America.

**This new organization was then given the name, *Christian Churches Together* (CCT).** And, at the suggestion of the Catholics, **only a small-member "steering committee" would do all the planning and setting of objectives to be reached. The way it was arranged, the Catholic voting block had the greatest influence on all decisions which it made.**

*Just how big was the CCT by the Spring of 2006? Here is the answer:*

**"Thirty-four churches and national Christian organizations, representing over 100 million Americans, have formed the broadest, most inclusive fellowship of Christian churches and traditions in the USA."**—*U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Office of Media Relationships*, press release, April 7, 2006.

But Benedict had done his homework: **In terms of the number of church members in each church**

that is represented in the CCT, the Catholic Church is the giant in the organization, with more adherents than the total number in the *National Council of Churches*.

"With some 67 million members, the Catholic Church has about 22 million more adherents than all NCC member denominations combined."—*Catholic News Service, June 10, 2005.*

**Linked arm-in-arm with the other churches, this new child of the papacy will have immense political clout.**

On February 6-9, 2007, in the Lake Avenue Church in Pasadena, California, the annual session of *Christian Churches Together* convened.

During that time, in a special closed-door meeting, a set of ten goals was discussed. It was suggested that, gradually at a later time, the immense church membership of CCT could be rallied to promote one after another of these projects throughout the States and in the halls of Congress.

After careful deliberation, this list, called the *Ten Point Objective*, was agreed upon.

The assembly had approved, what was called, the *Ten Point Objective*. Significantly, none—not one—of those ten goals could be fully achieved without enactment of new laws by Congress.

They included such items as prayer in public schools, honoring the U.S. flag, elimination of abortion, and marriage only between a man and woman.—This is all intended to win public support, and all requiring coercion of the Congress and the White House for their passage.

Many of the individuals working on this set of projects were doubtlessly very sincere in their concern to improve conditions in America. But, as we will learn later in this book, one point would, if enacted as the law of the land, generate immense problems.

**Included among the ten is this one:**

"Throughout all the land, a National Day of Rest shall be honored by governments, industrial manufacturers, and public shopping facilities."

This objective, which would require enactment of a National Sunday Law for the entire nation, would fulfill Pope Benedict's dream of so many years. His plan for a universal set of Sunday laws was gradually nearing reality.

#### IN CONCLUSION

The attitude of the Protestant majority is well summarized in these words:

"We say we shall observe one day a week as a day of rest and **we agree on the first day of the week**. Then someone says, 'No, we shall observe the seventh day' . . . We can't do both as a community—it is

a matter of convenience for the largest number, a matter of being able to act in common."—T.G. Wallace, canon of St. James, Westminster Church, London, Canada, in *The Religious Digest*, November 1942.

Over a century earlier, in a similar campaign for a National Sunday Law, the following statement was penned:

"We might add, in all justice, **if the opponents . . . [of our proposed Sunday Law] do not like our government and its Christian features, let them go to some wild, desolate land**, and in the name of the devil, and for the sake of the devil, subdue it, and set up a government of their own; and then if they can stand it, stay there till they die."—E.G. Graham, writing in *The Christian Statesman*, May 21, 1885.

Let us not forget the words of Jesus, which actually are a warning to be sure we obey God and not man:

"Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."—*Mark 12:17.*

**We dare not forget the command of God:**

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work."—*Exodus 20:8-10.*

**It is God who commanded us to keep the seventh day as the Sabbath.** But men say, "We have decided that, for the sake of uniformity, the first day, the papal day, shall be kept. *We must all do this.*" So turning away from God's law, they accept the papal law. And then they plead for a civil law, which would make a man a criminal against the community if he chooses to obey God by working six days and resting on the seventh-day Sabbath, Saturday.

**What does God want you to do—and what are you going to do?** When these National Sunday Laws first begin here in America, what will you do? Will you obey God or man?

Two chapters later in the book of Revelation, we are once again told about this little group which will remain faithful to God in this coming crisis:

"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God."—*Revelation 15:2.*

Verse 3 says "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." You may recall that the song of Moses was a song of deliverance from oppression (*see Exodus 15*).

As long as we are God's humble, obedient children, we will be perfectly safe in the days ahead.

**But it is urgent that we make a firm, definite**

**decision in this matter! We dare not wait till a later time.** Salvation is an individual matter; each one of us must decide for ourself. No one else can save us. We must individually get on God's side of the battle between godliness and immorality; between obedience by faith in Christ to God's Moral Law, or submission to the powers of earth.

"Once to every man and nation, Comes the moment to decide, In the strife 'twixt truth and falsehood, For the good or evil side."

**What shall we do with Jesus?** The men of His time decided to kill Him, when they were asked the question.

"Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let Him be crucified."—*Matthew 27:22*.

The choice is yours and mine. It is a decision no one else can make for you. "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" Just now make it. Let it be a good decision - for eternal life.

"O Jesus, my Redeemer, Thou art my joy and song, My Saviour and my solace, When griefs around me throng.

"O Jesus, my Redeemer, My song shall be of Thee; No other friend so constant, No friend so dear to me."

—*Frank E. Belden*

#### **MY COMMITMENT**

Kind Father, I thank Thee for warning us about this coming crisis. I want to please Thee in every way. Help me to prove faithful when the prophecy of Revelation 13 reaches its fulfillment.

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**COMING NEXT**—Revelation 13 is closely connected with the worldwide messages of the three symbolic angels in Revelation. We need to understand this for ourselves.

# The Prophecy of Revelation 14

## God's Last Warning Message

It was a cold winter night and a Roman legion was encamped on a small lakeside down in Gaul (modern France). Forty soldiers, unwilling to renounce their faith in Christ, were sentenced to die out on the frozen lake. Banded together in the biting, benumbing cold, they began to sing.

The stern, proud commander, on watch from his comfortable tent, heard the words:

"Forty wrestlers, wrestling for Thee, O Christ,  
Claim for Thee the victory, And ask from Thee the crown."

**Strangely moved by their words, the hardened soldier, so used to cursing and frantic pleas for mercy, listened intently.** These were men of his own company.

**Leaving the warmth of the tent, he went out into the cold,** gathered driftwood from the shore, and built a huge fire with flames leaping high into the night. Perhaps this would encourage them to renounce their faith and thus save their lives.

But no. **Again the sound of the refrain met his ears, although weaker now.**

"Forty wrestlers, wrestling for Thee, O Christ,  
Claim for Thee the victory, And ask from Thee the crown."

**—Then, suddenly, the song changed.**

"Thirty-nine wrestlers, wrestling for Thee, O Christ—."

And all at once, as the song still floated in across the ice, one of the prisoners climbed up the bank and dropped by the fire, a huddled mass. The song of the forty was no more. **One of Christ's faithful ones had given up the battle** and turned coward.

On the shore, clearly outlined against the fire, stood the commander. **Strange thoughts were surging through his mind.** He had heard of Christ, and His claims upon the obedience of men.

**Then, suddenly,** his soldiers saw him take one brief look at the pitiful specimen before him,—and, throwing off his own cloak, he raced down the bank and across the ice to the freezing prisoners, casting back the words, "As I live, I'll have your place!"

**In a few moments the song, with a fresh note of triumph,** was wafted again to the soldiers who had gathered, fearful and awestruck, on the silent shore.

"Forty wrestlers, wrestling for Thee, O Christ,  
Claim for Thee the victory, And ask from Thee the

crown."

*Oh, my friend, they will receive it, for they were faithful when confronted by a terrible crisis.*

**We are nearing another one, the final one, today. How will we respond?**

**When the time comes that men cease to repent, the end of the world as we know it will be at hand.** When men finally and irretrievably reject the mercies of God, they will begin to harvest the results of their sins. The prophet says, "Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him" (*Isaiah 3:11*).

**The time will certainly come when the gospel message will have finished its work in the world.** We distinctly read in Revelation 10:7 that such is to be the case: "The mystery of God should be finished" The mystery of God is the gospel (*Ephesians 6:19*).

**But when it is finished, what then?** In Isaiah 55 we read God's call to mankind:

"**Seek ye the Lord while He may be found,** call ye upon Him while He is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and **let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him;** and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."—*Isaiah 55:6-7*.

**The implication is that the time will come when God will not be near, when He may not be found.** *The time will come when there will be no more probation for the sinner.* This is positively stated in the Bible:

"**He that is unjust, let him be unjust still:** and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: **and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still:** and he that is holy, let him be holy still. **And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.**"—*Revelation 22:11-12*.

When that time comes, there will be no more changes. Probation will be past—forever. The line will have been drawn over which none can pass.

**Throughout history, God has sent special messages before special events were to occur.**

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets."—*Amos 3:7*.

God sent a special message by Noah to the world of his day (*2 Peter 2:5*). He sent Moses to raise up the church in the wilderness (*Acts 7:37-38*). He heralded a special message by the voice of John the Baptist, crying in the wilderness, and preparing the way for Christ's first coming (*Luke 1:17*).

**Today, as we stand before the grand climax of the ages, the Second Coming of Christ, God is sending a final message to men to prepare for that event.** To show its worldwide extent, this message

is symbolically described as given by three angels flying in midheaven calling to men everywhere.

To symbolize nations, God sometimes uses beasts, birds, metals, and so forth. To represent a corrupt church, He presents a lewd woman; for the true church, a pure woman.

But here in Revelation 14, to symbolizes three special world messages, God uses three angels flying in the midst of heaven. *Let us now examine these messages.*

#### THE MESSAGE OF THE FIRST ANGEL

**We have already learned that the Investigative Judgment is in session at the throne of God.** We know that we live in a time of great and excessive wickedness, when men despair for civilization itself! On a massive scale, there is violence, moral and political corruption, and international warfare. **At such a time as this, what message would we expect?—the very message of the first angel:**

**“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,**

**“Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”—Revelation 14:6-7.**

**The first angel announces that the hour of God’s judgement has come, and calls people to worship the living God—the Creator God who made the heavens and the earth, for only the Creator is worthy of our worship.** Christ as our great High Priest is doing His final work of mediation for man in the heavenly Sanctuary. Soon, none know how soon, this work will be ended. Then Christ will return for His faithful ones.

#### *This message has five characteristics:*

**First: The first angel’s message is to go to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.** This is not a small matter. It is crucially important—and must be given to everyone!

**Second: The first angel’s message calls men to “fear God.”** Surely such a message is needed today, for the world has lost God from its thinking. Solomon writes: “By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.” *Proverbs 16:6.*

Here is the parallel Bible verse to the first angel’s message:

**“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”—Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.**

**Third: The first angel’s message calls men to “give glory” to God.** A comparison of the first angel’s message with the verses quoted, just above, reveals that the way to give glory to God is to keep His commandments. **It also suggests that in giving the judgment-hour message, the duty of keeping the commandments will be emphasized,** as we will see later when we consider the third angel’s message.

**Most everything in our world is being glorified today, except God!** We also give glory to God when we “make confession to Him,” put away our sins, and obey Him.

“Give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto Him.”—*Joshua 7:19.*

Christ is “gloried in His saints” (*2 Thessalonians 1:10*). His faithful ones in these last days especially “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (*Revelation 14:12*).

**Fourth: The first angel’s message announces the hour of God’s judgment.** This could not be done unless the time of the judgment were known. We earlier discovered that the Investigative Judgment, symbolized by the cleansing of the Sanctuary, began in 1844 at the end of the 2300-year period. **“The hour of His judgment is come”** is the message of the first angel.

We are specifically told by this message to **“fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.”**

**The judgment is a serious and solemn matter. The law of God is the standard, and Jesus Christ is our advocate.** Surely it is high time that we accept the Saviour, and by His indwelling Spirit obey His law.

**“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ;** that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.”—*2 Corinthians 5:10-11.*

**Fifth: The first angel’s message calls men to worship the Creator.** God is worthy of worship because He is the Creator.

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things.”—*Revelation 4:11.*

“The sea is His, and He made it: and His hands formed the dry land. **O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.**”—*Psalms 95:5-6.*

**“The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish** from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world by His wisdom.”—*Jeremiah 10:11-12.*

**The special sign of the true God, the Creator, is the seventh-day Sabbath,** as taught in the Fourth Commandment.

**"It is a sign . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed."**—*Exodus 31:17*.

Since the Bible record of Creation is today denied by many, and since God's Sabbath and sign of Creatorship has been set aside in the practice of mankind in general, **it is urgent that all men everywhere be called to worship the true God, and in doing so to accept the sign of His creative power, which is the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment.**

In addition, since we have learned that **God's remnant people are identified as those who "keep the commandments of God,"** and since Jesus says of those who have chosen not to keep His commandments, "In vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (*Matthew 15:9*), a call to worship and commandment keeping would demand a message to obey all God's commandments, with special emphasis on the fourth, which men have set aside.

#### THE MESSAGE OF THE SECOND ANGEL

Here is the message of the second angel:

**"And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen,** that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."*—Revelation 14:8.*

**Here are nine special facts brought out as we study the message of the second angel:**

**First: This is mystic Babylon, who persecuted the saints** (*Revelation 17:5-6*). Babylon is called both a "great city" (*Revelation 14:8*), "which reigneth over the kings of the earth," and also a woman, "mother of harlots" (*Revelation 17:18, 5*). **Mystic Babylon is the papacy,** "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (*Revelation 17:6*).

**In the creed of Pope Pius IV we read:**

**"I acknowledge the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church for the mother and mistress of all Churches."**—*Joseph Faa Di Bruno, Catholic Belief*, p. 253.

**Second: This Babylon is the same power as the little horn of Daniel 7:25.** Like the little horn, Rome persecutes the saints and rules over the kings of the earth.

**"And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."**—*Daniel 7:25*.

As mentioned earlier, Leroy E. Froom, in his four-volume set of *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, found the records of 221 Bible scholars, going back hundreds of years, who had written down their understanding of the prophecy of the little horn of Daniel 7:25. Of these 221, **of all faiths including Catholic, 211 said that Daniel 7:25 was the papacy.** Only 10 thought it meant any other power.

**Third: This Babylon is the same as the beast of Revelation 13.** We clearly saw that this first beast of Revelation 13 is the same as the little horn of Daniel 7:25.

**Fourth: The second angel's message tells us that the beast's false doctrines largely came from ancient Babylon.** The Church of Rome is called "Babylon" because **its religion is a revival of the religion of ancient Babylon.** Its priesthood, dogma of the immaculate conception, and denial that God in Christ dwelt in the same flesh as fallen man—are all relics of ancient Babylon.

Both Babylons are alike in claiming universal spiritual jurisdiction and demanding submission under pains and penalties.

A careful examination of the ritual of ancient Babylon will reveal that the papacy is largely an adaptation of this ancient pagan religion. **It is not difficult to trace the connection between the two** in the religious history of Rome.

**"On the overthrow of Babylon by the Persians, who nourished a traditional hatred for its idolatry, the Chaldean priesthood fled to Pergamos in Asia Minor, and made it the headquarters of their religion . . . The last Pontiff King of Pergamos was Attalus III, who at his death bequeathed his dominions and authority to the Roman people, 133 B.C., and from that time the two lines of Pontifex Maximus were merged in the Roman one."**—*J. Garnier, The True Christ and the False Christ, Vol. 2, part 2, pp. 94-95.*

In this way the religion of ancient Babylon became an integral part of the religion of modern Babylon.

**"The beliefs of the Chaldeans of Babylon eventually 'penetrated as far as India, China, and Indo-China . . . In the opposite direction, they spread to Syria, to Egypt, and over the whole Roman world.'"**—*Franz Cumont, Astrology and Religion Among the Greeks and Romans, p. 74.*

**Fifth: The beast's teachings are actually those of ancient Babylon.**

**"I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden**

cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: **And upon her forehead was a name written, *Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth.*** And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.”—*Revelation 17:3-6*.

**The parallels between the Roman Church and ancient Babylon are striking.** The pagan Babylonian state religion had a wealthy and politically powerful hierarchy, as well as an elaborate temple ritual, and a priestly monopoly on learning. Its liturgy was performed in an ancient language unknown to the common people, and it had processions of divine images, a spring festival, as well as a virgin mother goddess who interceded for her worshipers.

**“The mighty Catholic Church was little more than the Roman Empire baptized.”**—A.C. Flick, *The Rise of the Mediaeval Church*, p. 148.

**Cardinal Newman (1831-1890) listed many many examples of doctrines and rituals from pagan Babylon which that church adopted** “in order to recommend the new religion to the heathen.” Then he listed some of them:

“The use of temples, and these dedicated to particular saints, and ornamented on occasions with branches of trees; incense, lamps, and candles; votive offerings on recovery from illness; holy water; asylums; holydays and seasons, use of [holy day] calendars, processions, blessings on fields; sacerdotal vestments, the tonsure, the ring in marriage, turning to the East, and images.”—*John H. Newman, An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 373.

**Babylon also contributed “the great and ubiquitous cult of the virgin mother-goddess** (actually more important than the highest gods). Babylonian Ishtar is identified with Astarte, Ashtoreth, Persephone, Artemis (Diana) of the Ephesians, Venus, and Isis. **This Babylonian goddess was called “virgin mother,” “merciful mother,” “queen of heaven,” and “my lady”** (from whence came “Madonna” or our lady). She was often shown in mother-and-infant images, or as a “*mater dolorosa*” interceding with a wrathful god in behalf of her worshipers. (For the source data on this, see S.H. Langdon, *Semitic Mythology*, pp. 12-13, 16-20, 24-25, 32-34, 111, 108, 341, 344, 368-369; *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1945 ed., Vol. 2, p. 858; Gordon J. Laing, *Survivals of Roman Religion*, pp. 92-95, 123-124, 129-131, 238-241.)

**Other pagan rites included purgatory (Cumont, *Astrology and Religion*, pp. 190-191), the adoption of December 25, the birthday of the “Invincible Sun” god and Mithraic Sunday, also orientation of church buildings and prayers facing**

east toward the rising sun god (*ibid.*, pp. 161-163; Laing, pp. 148-153, 190-193), and even the nimbus (circle) above the heads of Catholic saints in paintings (Laing, p. 246). From Isis worship came holy water, votive offerings, lifting up sacred objects during worship services, the priest’s bell, the decking of images with flowers and clothing, the tonsure (circled bald spot on top of the priest’s head in honor of the sun), processions, festivals, prayers for the dead, saint cults, and relics (Laing, *Survivals of Roman Religion*).

**Sixth: All nations are made to drink its wine.** Mystic Babylon holds a golden cup (*Revelation 17:4*). Ancient Babylon was also likened to a golden cup (*Jeremiah 51:7*).

“In 1825, on the occasion of the Jubilee, Pope Leo XII struck a medal, bearing on the one side his own image, and on the other, that of **the Church of Rome symbolized as a ‘woman,’ holding in her right hand a cup**, with the legend around her, *Sedet super universum [the whole world is her seat]*.”—Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, p. 6.

**The cup of Babylon contains its false doctrines—human traditions** which have been substituted for the pure word of truth found in the Holy Bible.

**“Like two sacred rivers flowing from paradise, the Bible and divine Tradition** [the decrees of popes and councils] **contain the Word of God**, the precious gems of revealed truth. Though these two divine streams are in themselves, on account of their divine origin, of equal sacredness, and are both full of revealed truths, still, **of the two, Tradition is to us more clear and safe.**”—Joseph Di Bruno, *Catholic Belief*, p. 33.

**“Scripture and Tradition are called the remote rule of faith** because the Catholic does not base his faith *directly* on these sources. **The proximate rule of faith is for him the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church**, which alone has received from God the authority to interpret infallibly the doctrines He has revealed, whether these be contained in Scripture or in Tradition.”—John Laux, *A Course in Religion for Catholic High Schools and Academies*, Vol. 1, p. 51.

Tragically, **the substitution of the law of the church for the law of God, thus fulfilling Daniel 7:25, powerfully testifies to the complete subordination of the Word of God to the authority of the Church of Rome.** This is the cup that Babylon seeks to make all nations drink of. The Reformation of the sixteenth century, denying the supremacy of the church’s authority and tradition over the Bible, was an effort to return to the pure truth of God’s Word.

Multitudes have been drinking the wine of her false doctrines. **When professed Christian church-**

es repudiate the fundamental principle of Protestantism by setting aside the authority of the Bible, and accepting tradition and speculation and man-made laws, they adopt the principles of modern Babylon and may be regarded as the "daughters of Babylon," deliberately choosing to drink of her cup.

**Seventh: Practically all the world will wonder at her.** The world stands in awe and wonderment at the remarkable revival of papal power. This has been especially true since the independent sovereignty of Vatican City was recognized by Italy in 1929. Said Pope Pius XI at that time:

"This moment, so historic, so important, that stands between the past and the future; which closes the past and opens the future . . ."—*Pope Pius XI, Address, June 27, 1929.*

**Eighth: This Babylon is scheduled for a final fall.** Though Rome claims, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow," yet God says, "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, . . . for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her" (*Revelation 18:7-8*).

Just as predicted, ancient Babylon suddenly fell. So modern Babylon will also suddenly fall.

"Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; He will render unto her a recompense."—*Jeremiah 51:6.*

Daniel presented Bible truth to Nebuchadnezzar; but, after his death, the nation became more corrupt. The climax was reached when Belshazzar used the sacred vessels from the house of God, dedicated to His worship, in which to drink the Babylonian wine of idolatrous worship. **Then came the handwriting on the wall, the fall of ancient Babylon,** and the death of Belshazzar. The entire story is in Daniel 5.

"**Babylon hath been a golden cup . . . that made all the earth drunken:** the nations have drunken of her wine."—*Jeremiah 51:7.*

The Babylonian religion spread error to many lands, including Rome, where it was adopted by the papacy.

**Ninth: There will be a final call to come out of Babylon. The message of the second angel Revelation 14:8 will be intensified by the fourth angel of Revelation 18:1-6.**

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. **And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen,** is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. **For all**

**nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication,** and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, **Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.** For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double."—*Revelation 18:1-6.*

**Here are two excellent summary statements on the meaning of this prophecy in Revelation 18:**

"This Scripture points forward to a time **when the announcement of the fall of Babylon, as made by the second angel of Revelation 14 (verse 8), is to be repeated,** with the additional mention of the corruptions which have been entering the various organizations that constitute Babylon, since that message was first given."—*Great Controversy, 603.*

"Revelation 18 points to the time when, as the result of rejecting the threefold warning of Revelation 14:6-12, **the church will have fully reached the condition foretold by the second angel, and the people of God still in Babylon will be called upon to separate** from her communion.

"**This message is the last that will ever be given to the world;** and it will accomplish its work. When those that 'believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness' (2 Thessalonians 2:12), shall be left to receive strong delusion and to believe a lie, then the light of truth will shine upon all whose hearts are open to receive it, and all the children of the Lord that remain in Babylon will heed the call: 'Come out of her, My people' (Revelation 18:4)."—*Great Controversy, 390.*

**Many of the modern Christian churches have rejected basic Bible doctrines** such as the fall of man, the Bible teaching that sin is the transgression of the law, the inspiration of Scripture, the Bible as a higher authority than the councils of men or their theories, and the importance of obeying God's Moral Law by the enabling grace of Christ.

**In the largest sense, Babylon includes all false religion, all apostasy.**

"And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all."—*Revelation 18:21.*

#### THE MESSAGE OF THE THIRD ANGEL

Here is the third angel's message:

"**And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image,** and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

**“The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God,** which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb . .

**“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”—Revelation 14:9-10, 12.**

**The third angel warns against the beast of Revelation 13 and his image, against receiving his mark in the right hand or in the forehead, and also declares the patient endurance of the saints who “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”**

We learned earlier that **the mark of the beast is a mark of allegiance to apostate powers, in contrast to loyalty to God’s sign and seal.** In the third angel’s message, there is not only a warning against the mark of the beast, but also an announcement of God’s unmixed wrath upon those who finally receive the mark.

**The warning of the third angel is given in a “loud voice,” and there are six things which we must consider:**

**First: The third angel’s message warns against the worship of the beast.** The first angel’s message calls men to “worship Him that made heaven and the earth.” But the third angel’s message warns against the worship of the beast. These two messages go together. Combined, they tell us that **we must not worship the beast power, but instead worship the true God, the Creator God.**

All the world will make a decision on this point: **Will they obey the beast’s command to violate one of the precepts in God’s Ten Commandment law,—or will they faithfully keep that law!**

This will be the issue in the final test to all mankind.

**Second: The third angel’s message warns against the image of the beast.** If we yield to the pressure of apostate Protestantism as it joins hands with the civil power to enforce the mark of the beast, we cannot be judged as true worshippers of the Creator.

**Third: The third angel’s message warns against receiving the mark of the beast.** In the last hours of the crisis, **the papal mark of Sundaykeeping will be enforced by civil law.** God’s warning is raised against this mark; and, as He calls men to worship the Creator, the Sabbath-Sunday issue will be clearly drawn.

**Fourth: The third angel’s message warns of God’s wrath upon those who do not heed the warning.** All must choose between receiving the

wrath of man or the wrath of God. The decision must be made between obeying man or obeying God.

The question could be asked, would God not accept my worship, even though I choose under pressure to violate His Sabbath law and honor the papal Sabbath? Jesus has provided the answer to this:

**“Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men . . . Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.”—Mark 7:7, 9.**

We cannot obey partially. **When we understand the truth about the Bible Sabbath, we cannot keep holy the sacred day of the papacy, and be accepted by God.**

Catholic leaders have a clear understanding of what is involved here:

**“The observance of Sunday by Protestants is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the [Catholic] Church.”—Monsignor Louis Segur, Plain Talk about the Protestantism of Today, p. 213.**

“The Bible says, ‘Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.’ The Catholic Church says: ‘No! by my divine power **I abolish the Sabbath day, and command you to keep holy the first day of the week.**’ And, lo! the entire civilized world bows down in reverent obedience to the command of the holy Catholic Church!”—*Thomas Enright, CSSR in a letter dated January 11, 1892, quoted in American Sentinel [Catholic], New York, June 1, 1893, p. 173.*

In view of these facts, how could we expect God to remain silent on such an issue as changing the only commandment that has His sign and seal? God’s wrath could not justly be visited upon men unless they had warning.

For over a century the Sabbath truth has been spread around the world. And the message continues to go out. As one writer clearly stated:

**“The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted.** When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. While **the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God,** the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God’s law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. **While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God.**”—*Great Controversy, 605.*

**Fifth: The third angel’s message identifies those who will not receive the mark of the beast!**

“Here is the patience of the saints: **here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.**”—*Revelation 14:12*.

**This verse is decisive! It clearly spells out exactly who will receive the mark of the beast—and who will not!**

We earlier learned that Revelation 12 told the story of how God’s faithful people were persecuted by the papacy during the Dark Ages. Then, at the end of that chapter, **it identified exactly who were the special people of God who would be alive at the end of time.**

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”—*Revelation 12:17*.

That verse of Scripture set the stage for what we learned in Revelation 13 about a beast power which would attempt to control men and place upon them a mark identifying them as obeying it.

**The Bible Sabbath is pitted against the counterfeit holy day, the Sunday.**

Then we come to Revelation 14—and here again, **in the messages of the three angels, we find the two groups once again:** the mark of the beast for obedience to earthly powers vs. a small group which will remain true to “the commandments of God.” They will “keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

**This dedicated group clings to Jesus, their wonderful Saviour. And, by His enabling grace, they obey His Moral Law of Ten Commandments.**

Reading Revelation 12:17 and 14:12, it is obvious that if we trust in Christ, and keep the commandments of God, we will not receive the mark of the beast! We will receive the seal of God.

“Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.”—*Revelation 7:3*.

After this crisis is past, it will be seen that the Father’s name is written upon them (*Revelation 14:1*).

**On the other hand, if we choose to obey man rather than God, we will be accounted as worshipers of the beast and his image, and will receive his mark.**

This immense controversy will ultimately involve the entire world.

**Sixth: This final call includes the message of Revelation 18:1-3.** There is also a fourth angel. Here is the first part of his message:

“And after these things **I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power;** and the earth was lightened with his glory.

“**And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and**

is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

“**For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.**”—*Revelation 18:1-3*.

**This angel of Revelation 18 enlarges on the second angel’s message, as it announces that the sins of Babylon have become even more evil.** Then we are given God’s last call to the world, just before probation closes:

“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, **Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.** For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.”—*Revelation 18:4-5*.

**Note the following six things about this angel and the final call:** (1) The voice is from heaven. (2) God has a people who are still in the confusion of modern Babylon. (3) He is calling them to come out and be separate. (4) He does not wish His people to partake of the sins of Babylon. (5) He wishes them to avoid the plagues that are to fall on the apostate church and its daughter churches which cling to its error. (6) Babylon’s sins have reached unto heaven. Her cup of iniquity is full. Human probation is about to close.

**As a result of the sharing of this judgment-hour warning to mankind, by books and preaching, men are learning the issues** in various parts of the world. The call is urgent: “Come out of her, My people!” “Keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus!”

Upon learning the truth about this, **a significant number are coming out and being gathered with God’s last-day commandment-keeping people.** They cling to the faith of Jesus and, by His empowering grace, keep the commandments of God.

**Nothing can be clearer than the fact that if we trust in Christ and, in His strength, obey all the commandments of God—His Moral Code of right and wrong—we will not receive the mark of the beast!**

As servants of God, we will receive His seal (*Revelation 7:3*). We will have—not the mark of the beast written upon our foreheads—but, the glorious promise that the Father’s name will be written there. As part of the final remnant, we will be among those “having His Father’s name written in their foreheads” (*Revelation 14:1*).

**But, tragically, if we choose to obey men rather than God, then we will be classed with the**

worshippers of the beast and his image, and will receive his mark. The issue is very clear.

When a man in Duxbury, Massachusetts, refused to pay one-cent postage on a letter, it was returned to the Plymouth dead-letter office. Postmaster William Godwin disclosed that when the letter was opened, it contained a \$450 check.

**Let not this priceless message of the three angels, so fraught with eternal life, be but a dead letter to you,** to be sent back to the sender, to Jesus Christ!

#### **What will our choice be?**

If **Moses** were here, what would he do?

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; **choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.**"—*Hebrews 11:24-25*.

What would **Elijah** do?

"And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? **if the Lord be God, follow Him:** but if Baal, then follow him!"—*1 Kings 18:21*.

What would **Solomon** say?

"**He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law,** even his prayer shall be abomination."—*Proverbs 28:9*.

What would **Jesus** say and do? What did He tell us to do?

**"If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love;** even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."—*John 15:10-11*.

"Then said Jesus unto His disciples, **If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.**

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.

**"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?** or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

**"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works."**—*Matthew 16:24-27*.

What would Paul say?

**"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are** to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"—*Romans 6:16*.

What would Peter say?

"Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." **"We ought to obey God rather than men."**—*Acts 4:19; 5:29*.

What would John the Revelator say?

**"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."**—*Revelation 22:14*.

**God has placed in our hands a banner upon which is inscribed: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."** Revelation 14:12. This is a distinct, separating message, a message that is to give no uncertain sound. It is to lead the people away from the broken cisterns that contain no water, to the unfailing Fountain of the water of life.

**Friends, we dare not wait to make a decision on this! Heaven is waiting, the final crisis is nearing.**

As Dwight L. Moody spoke in Farwell Hall in Chicago on the evening of October 8, 1871, he repeated the words of Pilate in his moment of procrastination, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?"

And then Moody said, **"I wish you would take this text home with you and turn it over in your minds.** Then next week we will come to Calvary and the cross, and we will decide what to do with Jesus."

Then Sankey began to sing. But his song was never finished. **It was interrupted by the rush and the roar of fire engines, Chicago was ablaze.** The great Chicago fire had begun; some say because a cow kicked over a lantern in a barn.

Moody later said, **"I will never again give an audience a week to decide** whether to accept Christ!"

**None of us can know what the next day may bring. We must choose God's side in the warfare between sin and righteousness. We must do it now**—and, clinging to Christ, we must stick with it. Each hesitation gradually hardens the heart. Procrastination can result in eternal loss.

**What shall we choose? Shall we choose the side of God and all His faithful ones in ages past, and His final remnant today who keep His commandments?** Or shall we choose the path of popularity and disobedience—and the coming wrath of God?

**"Choose you this day whom ye will serve . . .** But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."—*Joshua 24:15*.

"You have longed for sweet peace, And for faith to increase, And have earnestly, fervently prayed; But you cannot have rest, Or be perfectly blest, Until all on the altar is laid."

#### **MY COMMITMENT**

Just now, while this is fresh in your mind, is

the time to make this decision. You have wanted to improve your life for a long time, and this decision will bring you peace of heart.

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**COMING NEXT**—In the next chapter, we will view the end of the world - and a brief glimpse of the heaven for God's faithful ones that lies beyond it.

# Preparing for What is Ahead

*As It Was in the Days of Noah*

Dionysius II (397–343 B.C.) ruled Syracuse, Sicily, from 367 B.C. to 357 B.C. and again from 346 B.C. to 344 B.C. **During his reign, Dionysius met with repeated attacks on his life and his throne.**

According to an ancient legend, one of the king's servants, Damocles, expressed a desire to sit on his throne for a day. To this, Dionysius agreed.

But the next day, while sitting there enjoying a big meal, **Damocles happened to look up and see a sharpened sword suspended above his head by a single hair.**

Jumping up, Damocles begged Dionysius, sitting nearby, that he no longer wanted to be so fortunate as to sit on the throne!

As for Dionysius, the historical reality, due to his own corrupt activities and repeated attempts by others to slay him, resulted in his being driven from his throne. At the age of only 54, he died an impoverished man in a shack in Corinth, Greece, in 343 B.C.

Several years later Greek and Roman writers, including Cicero, referred to this legend about Damocles.

**The story of the sword over Damocles has come down through the ages as a striking illustration of the nearness of a deadly peril.**

In the opinion of many thinking people today, the entire human race is now sitting in that chair, with total destruction suspended above by a hair, ready to fall. **A delicate trigger of chance seems to be keeping us going on, day by day,** in our ordinary round of activities, waiting, wondering, worrying.

**No ordinary peril threatens mankind today. For we are living on the edge of the end!**

**Down through history, nations—and even entire civilizations—have fallen due to their refusal to acknowledge the God of heaven and to obey His Moral Law.**

**The first terrible example of this was the Flood which covered the earth in Noah's time.** Based on the Hebrew text, it began 1,656 years after Creation Week, which, by our dating, would be about 2348 B.C.

**“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth,** and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”—*Genesis 6:5*.

**“The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.** And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, **The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence** through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.”—*Genesis 6:11-13*.

**But Noah was different. He loved God and obeyed His every command.** That is what God wants us to do now.

“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” **“Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him,** so did he.” “And the Lord said unto Noah, . . . for thee have I seen righteous before Me in this generation.”—*Genesis 6:8, 22; 7:1*.

**For the next 120 years, Noah warned the antediluvians to return to God before it was too late.** But nearly all of them ignored or ridiculed the warning. They saw him gradually building the Ark, a gigantic boat, and laughed at what he was doing. They mocked his messages, pleading with them to repent, because God was going to send a flood of waters to cover the earth. As in our own day, every form of evil was in the ascendancy. Wickedness of every type was practiced.

**“But Noah stood like a rock amid the tempest.** Surrounded by popular contempt and ridicule, he distinguished himself by his holy integrity and unwavering faithfulness. A power attended his words, for it was the voice of God to man through His servant. **Connection with God made him strong in the strength of infinite power,** while for one hundred and twenty years his solemn voice fell upon the ears of that generation in regard to events, which, so far as human wisdom could judge, were impossible.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 96.

**Had the people repented, God would have turned away His wrath,** as He afterward did when the city of Nineveh repented. But their reply to Noah's final call to repent was to plunge the more deeply into immorality.

**Then one afternoon, some of the wildlife, along with Noah and his family entered the Ark**—and the giant door on the front of the ship was silently closed by unseen hands.

**Everyone was startled; but, as the days passed and nothing happened, the wicked grew yet more bold** in their rebellion and their evil words against Noah. Their period of probation was about to expire.

**And then it began.**

“And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth . . . The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.”—*Genesis 7:10, 11*.

**On the eighth day, clouds formed in the skies.**

This was remarkable, for clouds had never been seen before. The earth had always been watered each evening from beneath (*Genesis 2:6*).

**Then came the muttering of thunder, flashes of lightning,** and soon large drops of water began falling.

“The world had never witnessed anything like this, and the hearts of men were struck with fear. **All were secretly inquiring, ‘Can it be that Noah was in the right,** and that the world is doomed to destruction?’

**“Darker and darker grew the heavens, and faster came the falling rain.** The beasts were roaming about in the wildest terror, and their discordant cries seemed to moan out their own destiny and the fate of man.

“Then ‘the fountains of the great deep’ were ‘broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.’ **Water appeared to come from the clouds in mighty cataracts.** Rivers broke away from their boundaries, and overflowed the valleys. Jets of water burst from the earth with indescribable force, throwing massive rocks hundreds of feet into the air, and these, in falling, buried themselves deep in the ground.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 99.

As the violence increased, rocks, trees, and buildings were hurled in every direction. The terror of the wicked was beyond expression. —*Noah, who had faithfully warned them all those years, was right after all! They should have heeded that call to repent of their sins and worship only the Creator. They should have obeyed God’s Moral Law after all!*

From the highest peaks, the few who had reached them looked abroad upon a shoreless sea. And then they too were covered by the angry waters.

“The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”—*2 Peter 3:6-7*.

**Down through the centuries, God’s method of dealing with overwhelming evil has not changed.**

While the godly Shemites remained in the higher hill country, the others left the Ararat Mountains where the Ark had settled after the Flood, and settled in the Mesopotamian Valley by the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. **On this great Plain of Babylonia, they rapidly descended into great wickedness and, in their rebellion against God, began constructing the gigantic Tower of Babel.** They wanted to form a gigantic confederacy of evil which should control the world from a single location. **But Genesis 11:1-9 tells how God destroyed their temple and gave them multiple languages, so they would scatter throughout the world.** (Many

scholars believe that Genesis 10:25, which speaks of a division of the world in the days of Peleg, refers to when the Babel builders were scattered in little groups to far lands.)

**We will briefly mention two other mighty kingdoms which followed—and also fell due to their immorality.**

**Having conquered ancient Babylonia, the shattered kingdom which remained in Mesopotamia after God's judgments destroyed the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9), Assyria was one of the most feared empires in ancient history.** Nineveh, its capital, was immense. Its rulers had inherited the land of Nimrod (*Micah 5:6*), the first great empire builder, who had founded Babel (*Genesis 10:8-10*).

**Nineveh today is but a vast, irregular rectangle of mounds** lying near Mosul on the left bank of the Tigris River. Standing there on the central mound and looking out over the outlines of Nineveh, we can see why God called it a "great city" (*Jonah 1:2*). **The ancient walls in the distance, seven-and-a-half miles in length, encompassed 1,640 acres of buildings and streets.**

But not much is left now. Archaeologists were able to find Sennacherib's palace—containing no less than seventy-one halls, chambers, and passages whose walls, almost without exception, were originally paneled with sculptured slabs of alabaster.

You will recall how **Jonah was told to go to this politically strong and powerful seat of a vast empire, and warn it that, unless its inhabitants repented—God would permit it to be destroyed.**

"Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before Me."—*Jonah 1:2*.

His message was a simple, clear call for repentance of sin. For a brief time the people of Nineveh accepted the message. **But later, scorning their former fears, the Ninevites plunged all the more deeply into sin.** It eventually dared to plan an attack on God's people—and a single angel from God destroyed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night (*2 Kings 19; Isaiah 37; 2 Chronicles 32*).

"Against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel."—*2 Kings 19:22*.

**And so it was that Assyria and its proud capital, Nineveh, was finally destroyed—blotted from the earth—in 609 B.C.**

**After this, arose the empire of Babylon. Would it learn the lesson that morality and obedience to God was their only safety?**

**Shortly after conquering Assyria, Nabopolassar, and his son Nebuchadnezzar, massively**

**rebuilt the capital city of Babylon.** Excavations a hundred years ago showed that the old, inner city lay on the east bank of the Euphrates and was about a square mile in size. In its northwest corner was the royal palace, and south of that a massive temple with its 300-foot temple tower. The splendid hanging gardens were nearby. Then Nebuchadnezzar added an immense addition to the city on the western side of the river, along with a second new palace a mile-and-a-half north of the city.

What did this king later say? And what happened?

**"Is not this great Babylon, that I have built** for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and **for the honour of my majesty?"—Daniel 4:30.**

—Nebuchadnezzar was stripped of his reasoning powers for several years, "by the decree of the watchers, and . . . the holy ones" (*verse 17*).

Although he repented, his descendants did not learn the lesson; and, **in Daniel 5, we are told the story of how God's judgments fell on proud Babylon, as the forces of Cyrus poured in through the mysteriously open gates** in 538 B.C. God named Cyrus and said he would conquer Babylon—173 years before it happened (*Isaiah 44:24; 45:1-3*).

**"Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus,** whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut."—*Isaiah 45:1*.

**Over the centuries, great cities and empires arose and collapsed. Immorality destroyed them all.** They refused to obey God's Ten Commandment law.

**But now we come down to our own time in history.** God has said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man" (*Genesis 6:3*). When will God's mercy end today? How much longer will He plead with the human heart? Where is that line, beyond which even divine love cannot go?

**The warnings of the faithful to return to obedience to God's Ten Commandment Law, the pleadings of God's Spirit are being rejected.** Hearts are becoming harder and men and women are daily plunging deeper into sin.

**A massive increase of evil has poured in upon us on a scale before unknown.** The older ones among us are well-aware that the wickedness exploded into vast amounts since the mid-1960s.

Pornography, abortion, crime, violence, vile lusts, rebellion, and warfare. Gambling casinos or lotteries in nearly every state. Narcotics which stupefy and ruin minds and bodies. Bribery of government officials. Political, business and governmental

corruption—all on a scale never before seen.

**On and on the list goes. It keeps getting bigger and worse. Every form of evil is condoned or encouraged.** The heart is sickened by the sight. We are now in the 21st century, and the sheer magnitude of wickedness threatens to overwhelm civilization.

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.”—*1 Timothy 4:1-2*.

**It is of deepest significance, that accompanying this dramatic increase of evil,—has come an ever-increasing number of natural disasters,** especially since the early 1990s. The God of heaven has a line drawn, and mankind is crossing that line.

**We are now in the midst of increasing judgments from Heaven,** in the form of volcanoes, tornadoes, hurricanes, tsunamis, fires, violent wind storms, and floods. **God is trying to wake up the world to its terrible moral crisis. He is calling on men and women to repent, but they are not listening.**

God is withdrawing His Spirit from the wicked, and **Satan is bringing these natural disasters upon the world.**

**Friends, I tell you: We are rapidly nearing the end of God’s merciful pleading. Our world is about to cross over the line between God’s patience and His wrath.**

“There is a time, we know not when, A place we know not where, That marks the destiny of men, To glory or despair.

“There is a line by us unseen, That crosses every path; The hidden boundary between, God’s patience and His wrath.

“How far may we go on in sin? How long will God forbear? Where does hope end, and where begin The confines of despair?

“An answer from the skies is sent; ‘Ye that from God depart, While it is called today, repent, And harden not your heart.’ ”—*J. Addison Alexander*.

**The modern world, sinful, sorrowful, diseased, crime-ridden.** Proud, reckless, abandoned, filled with sports and pleasure seeking, fleeing from criminals, enjoying the miseries of sin. Great cities, splattered with neon lights, filled with bars and nightclubs, discos and brothels. Course laughter mingled with shrieks of terror. **But, in the midst of it all, God says, “Repent!”**

“And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives. They were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

“Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot;

they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded. But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

“Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.”—*Luke 17:26-30*.

**Like a great bell tolling, the voice of God is heard above the intense excitement, groanings, and carnage,** calling men to return to obedience to the moral principles He gave on Mount Sinai. **And the bell tolls loudest just before it is forever silenced!**

**After the third angel’s message has ended, human probation will close—and then will follow the Seven Last Plagues** and other judgments, predicted in Revelation 15:6 to 18:24.

“The cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.”—*Revelation 16:19-21*.

**Where will you and I stand when the voice of mercy is no more heard?** The time is coming when never another heart shall be touched by the pleadings of the Spirit of God, and God says, “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still” (*Revelation 22:11*).

“For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.”—*1 Thessalonians 5:3*.

As long as there is hope, we may be chastened by God for our profit (*Hebrews 12:9-11*). But it is possible for us to reach a point of hopelessness. **“He, that being often reprov’d hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy”** (*Proverbs 29:1*).

“In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; **having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.**”—*2 Timothy 3:1-5*

If, just now, you are outside the safety of Christ’s care, do not blame God; blame yourself. *The door is still open, but it will not always be so.* —It may be closed early for you, if you die suddenly.

**The world has had six thousand years to prove itself; that is, it has been on probation.** The love

of God and the law of God have been pitted against Satan's hate and his rebellion against God and His law. But time is now running out.

**"Behold, now is the accepted time;** behold, now is the day of salvation."*—2 Corinthians 6:2.*

**When that final opportunity ends, probation will forever close, and not only will Satan intensify the number of natural disasters,—but, in addition, God will send the Seven Last Plagues.**

These plagues are mentioned in Revelation 16. At that time, those who choose to cling to the cross of Christ and the commandments of God will not worship the beast or his image or receive his mark. They will have the victory. Those who yield will receive the plagues.

**Please note that throughout the entire description in Scripture of what happens to the wicked after probation closes—they never repent.** Their choice has been made and at that time they share Satan's hatred of God.

**After the plagues begin to fall, it will be too late for any to get right with God.** The Son of God, our Mediator, will leave the Sanctuary in heaven. At that time, His priestly robes of intercession are laid aside and He prepares to return to earth in the clouds of heaven—as "King of kings and Lord of lords" (*Revelation 19:16*)—for His own.

**Will God's faithful ones be protected during the falling of the plagues?** God will take care of His children. His promise of protection during the falling of the plagues is found in that wonderful chapter, Psalm 91, which we should all know by heart.

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. **I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress:** my God; in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence."*—Psalm 91:1-3.*

**The above verses promise protection** against the first plague (*Revelation 16:2*). But, in addition, protection against the "burning sun" or "destruction . . . at noonday" of the fourth plague (*Revelation 16:8-9*) is promised in Psalm 91:5-6. Protection against the "darkness" or "terror by night" of the fifth plague (*Revelation 16:10*) is promised in Psalm 91:5. **Even though thousands fall nearby, God promises to protect you through it all** (*Psalm 91:4-11*).

**"For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion:** in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me."*—Psalm 27:5.*

**As soon as Christ declares that probation has ended, His promise is that He will return soon after for the redeemed.**

**"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still:** and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that

is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

**"And, behold, I come quickly;** and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be."*—Revelation 22:11-12.*

**Each one of us individually must "prepare to meet thy God" (Amos 4:12). How do we prepare?**

**By faith:** "Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for **he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.**"*—Hebrews 11:6.*

**By repentance:** "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."*—Luke 13:3.*

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you."*—Acts 2:38.*

**By obedience:** "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; **but he that doeth the will of My Father** which is in heaven."*—Matthew 7:21.*

**"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life,** and may enter in through the gates into the city."*—Revelation 22:14.*

**By working with Christ:** "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations . . . **and, lo, I am with you always,** even unto the end of the world."*—Matthew 28:19-20.*

**To say it in another way, every morning** earnestly dedicate yourself anew to God and, in a spirit of prayer, open and study His Inspired Writings. **As you go through the day,** walk closely by the side of Christ, praying as you go, and obeying His Moral Code. **Frequently** send up prayers of thankfulness and requests for guidance. **When in doubt** as to what you should do next, do the next duty. **Share the messages** of truth you have learned. **Fellowship** with God's people. **On Friday, prepare** for the Sabbath **and keep the Bible Sabbath holy.**

Surely right now is the day of salvation; **this is the time, while probation lingers, to accept Christ**—for He is still ministering in the heavenly Sanctuary in our behalf.

"Five bleeding wounds He bears, Received on Calvary; They pour effectual prayers, They strongly speak for me. 'Forgive him, O, forgive!' they cry, Nor let the contrite sinner die." *—Charles Wesley.*

**Up there in the judgment court in heaven, Christ will plead your case if you will let Him.** But that court is nearing the end of the great ledger of names. "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts" (*Hebrews 3:15*).

Today Christ ministers for us in the Most Holy Place of the Sanctuary in heaven.

**"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul,** both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into

that within the veil.”—*Hebrews 6:19*.

**Let us anchor our faith up there** in that heavenly Sanctuary, before our High Priest ends His mediation and comes out, and before the seven angels come down with the Seven Last Plagues.

**The next great event after the falling of the plagues is the Second Coming of Christ** in the clouds of heaven to call forth His sleeping saints from their graves and translate the living righteous, so they can meet Him in the air (*1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17*). He will then take them to heaven for a thousand years where they will decide the cases of the wicked (*Revelation 20:4; 1 Corinthians 6:2-3*).

After that, Christ, His faithful ones, and the Holy City will return to earth (*Revelation 21:2*). The dead will be resurrected and marshaled into forces in an attempt to destroy the faithful in the Holy City (*Revelation 20:7-9*).

When that has happened, everyone in the universe will fully understand that God is good, and the devil, his angels, and his followers are incorrigibly wicked. So all the wicked will be slain in the lake of fire which covers the earth's surface (*Revelation 20:10, 14-15*). When it has ended the wicked will be totally blotted out—destroyed—for eternity (*Malachi 4:1-3; Psalm 37:20, 37-38; 145:20; 73:17-19*). Then God will make a new world (*Revelation 21:1; Psalm 37:37-38*), which will be entirely like the Garden of Eden for His people to enjoy forever.

**Notice that it is on the surface of the earth that the wicked are burned up and destroyed. Then, after that fire, brief for many, goes out, the righteous will inherit the surface of the earth, which God will make new, as their eternal home. So if the wicked will burn forever, the righteous could not inherit the earth!**

Here are several Bible passages which tell us that **the wicked will be blotted out before the redeemed inherit the earth:**

“For evildoers shall be cut off: but **those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth**. For yet a little while, and **the wicked shall not be**: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. **But the meek shall inherit the earth**; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”—*Psalm 37:9-11*.

“For, behold, **the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven**; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: **and the day that cometh shall burn them up**, saith the Lord of hosts, **that it shall leave them neither root nor branch**.

“But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; **and ye shall go forth**, and grow up as calves of the stall. And **ye shall tread down the wicked**; for they

**shall be ashes** under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.”—*Malachi 4:1-3*.

**Eternal life forever in the earth made new!** You and I can inherit if we will remain true to our Creator! To live with Christ and holy beings forever; how glorious it will be!

**One evening a little girl, walking hand in hand with her father, looked up at the brilliant shining stars** in the night sky. With an enraptured sigh, she said, “Heaven must be beautiful!” When her father asked her why she thought so, she replied, “ ’Cause the lights coming through the cracks in the floor are so pretty.”

**God's faithful children are soon to inherit “an everlasting kingdom”** (*Psalm 145:13*) and, with immortal bodies (*1 Corinthians 15:53*), have “everlasting life” (*Romans 6:22; Galatians 6:8*).

**“And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life.”**—*1 John 2:25*.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, **that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**”—*John 3:16*.

**“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.”**—*1 John 5:11*.

“And I give unto them eternal life; **and they shall never perish.**”—*John 10:28*.

**“O the beautiful hills where the saints will rest, When the Lord has made all things new;** Where we shall forget, in the smiles of God, The toils we have journeyed through.”

**We can hardly imagine how wonderful will be this new land.**

“But as it is written, **Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard**, neither have entered into the heart of man, **the things which God hath prepared for them** that love Him.”—*1 Corinthians 2:9*.

Those who remain faithful to God, in spite of the difficulties of earth, will receive every possible good thing in heaven.

“For the Lord God is a sun and shield: **the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.**”—*Psalm 84:11*.

**It will be a place of total happiness for all.**

“But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”—*Psalm 37:11*.

**“Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fullness of joy;** at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”—*Psalm 16:11*.

**Even the animals will be peaceful and contented.**

“The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the

serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, saith the Lord."—*Isaiah 65:25*.

**Peaceful country living will be our inheritance.** It will include gardening, which will be a source of great happiness to the redeemed.

**"And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards,** and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and **Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.** They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that **before they call, I will answer;** and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."—*Isaiah 65:21-24*.

**Every Sabbath day, the redeemed will gather to worship their Creator.**

**"For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make,** shall remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and **from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord.**"—*Isaiah 66:22-23*.

"And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: **they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.**"—*Isaiah 35:10*.

"All hail the power of Jesus' name! Let angels prostrate fall; Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown Him Lord of all!" —Edward Perronet

—Eden was heaven in miniature. This is what we will find in the earth made new! We dare not miss having this! It is our decisions and our actions now that determine what our future will be.

Oh, my friend, we must be there! God wants us there! Jesus wants us there! All the angels of heaven want us there! It is an individual choice. If you have not done so already, make that decision now—and, in the strength of Christ, remain firm to the end.

"Just think of stepping on shore and finding it Heaven; Of taking hold of a hand, and finding it God's hand; Of breathing new air and finding it celestial; Of feeling invigorated and finding it immortality; Of passing from storm and tempest to an unbroken calm; Of looking up—and finding it home!" —Myrtle Erickson

#### MY COMMITMENT

Oh, Father! I must be there! I must permit nothing to come between my soul and my Saviour! I give Thee all, just now! Take me, hold me, guide me in the days ahead. Help me to remain obedient to Thy Word, and to remain on the path that leads all the way to the earth made new! In Jesus' name, I send this earnest petition. I give Thee all; I give Thee all, just now. Amen.